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NATIONAL REVIEW

Armed & Dangerous?

THE NEW WAR ON THE POLICE

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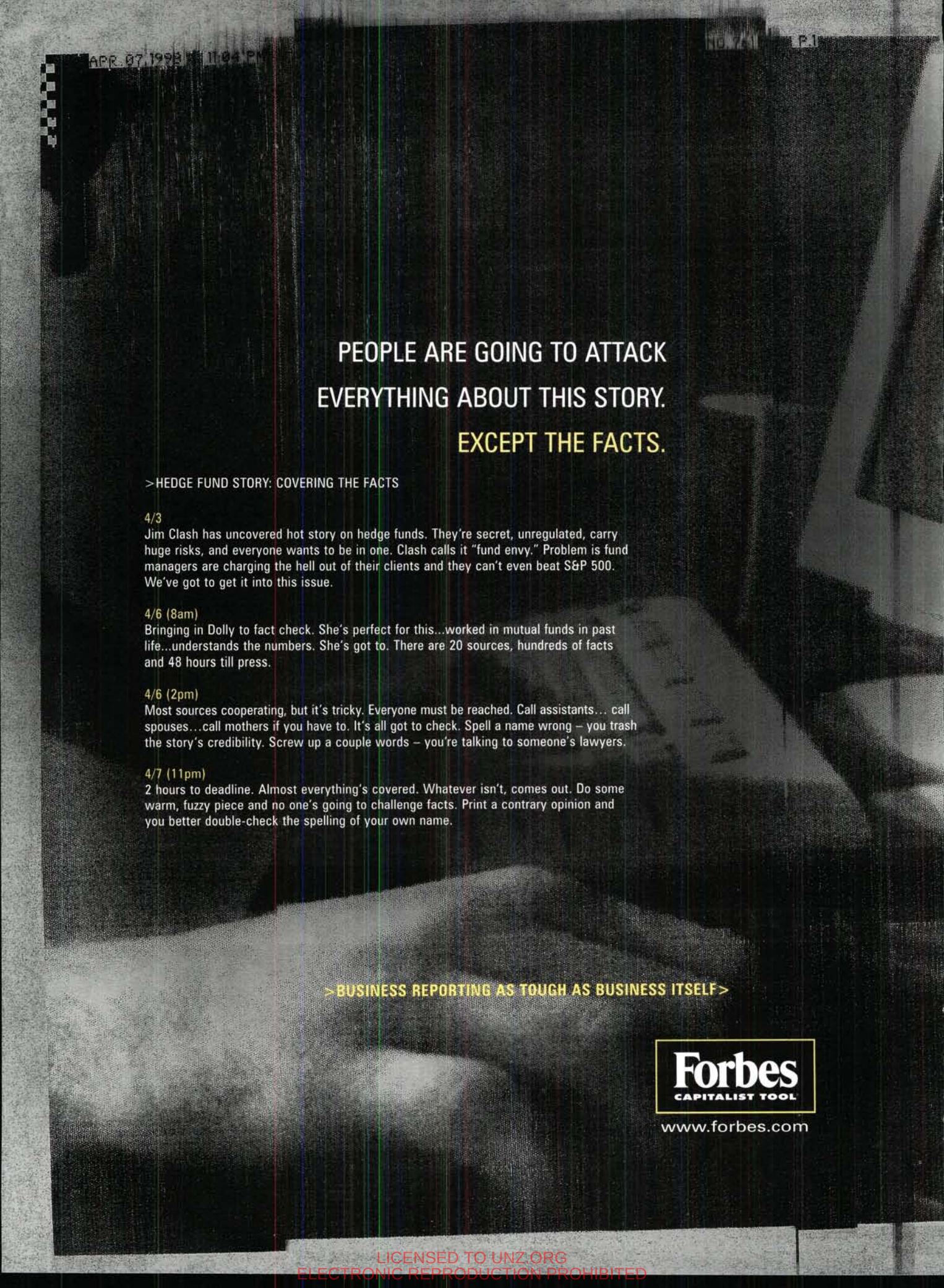
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PEOPLE ARE GOING TO ATTACK
EVERYTHING ABOUT THIS STORY.
EXCEPT THE FACTS.
>HEDGE FUND STORY: COVERING THE FACTS
4/3
Jim Clash has uncovered hot story on hedge funds. They're secret, unregulated, carry huge risks, and everyone wants to be in one. Clash calls it "fund envy." Problem is fund managers are charging the hell out of their clients and they can't even beat S&P 500. We've got to get it into this issue.
4/6 (8am)
Bringing in Dolly to fact check. She's perfect for this...worked in mutual funds in past life...understands the numbers. She's got to. There are 20 sources, hundreds of facts and 48 hours till press.
4/6 (2pm)
Most sources cooperating, but it's tricky. Everyone must be reached. Call assistants... call spouses...call mothers if you have to. It's all got to check. Spell a name wrong – you trash the story's credibility. Screw up a couple words – you're talking to someone's lawyers.
4/7 (11pm)
2 hours to deadline. Almost everything's covered. Whatever isn't, comes out. Do some warm, fuzzy piece and no one's going to challenge facts. Print a contrary opinion and you better double-check the spelling of your own name.
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NATIONAL REVIEW

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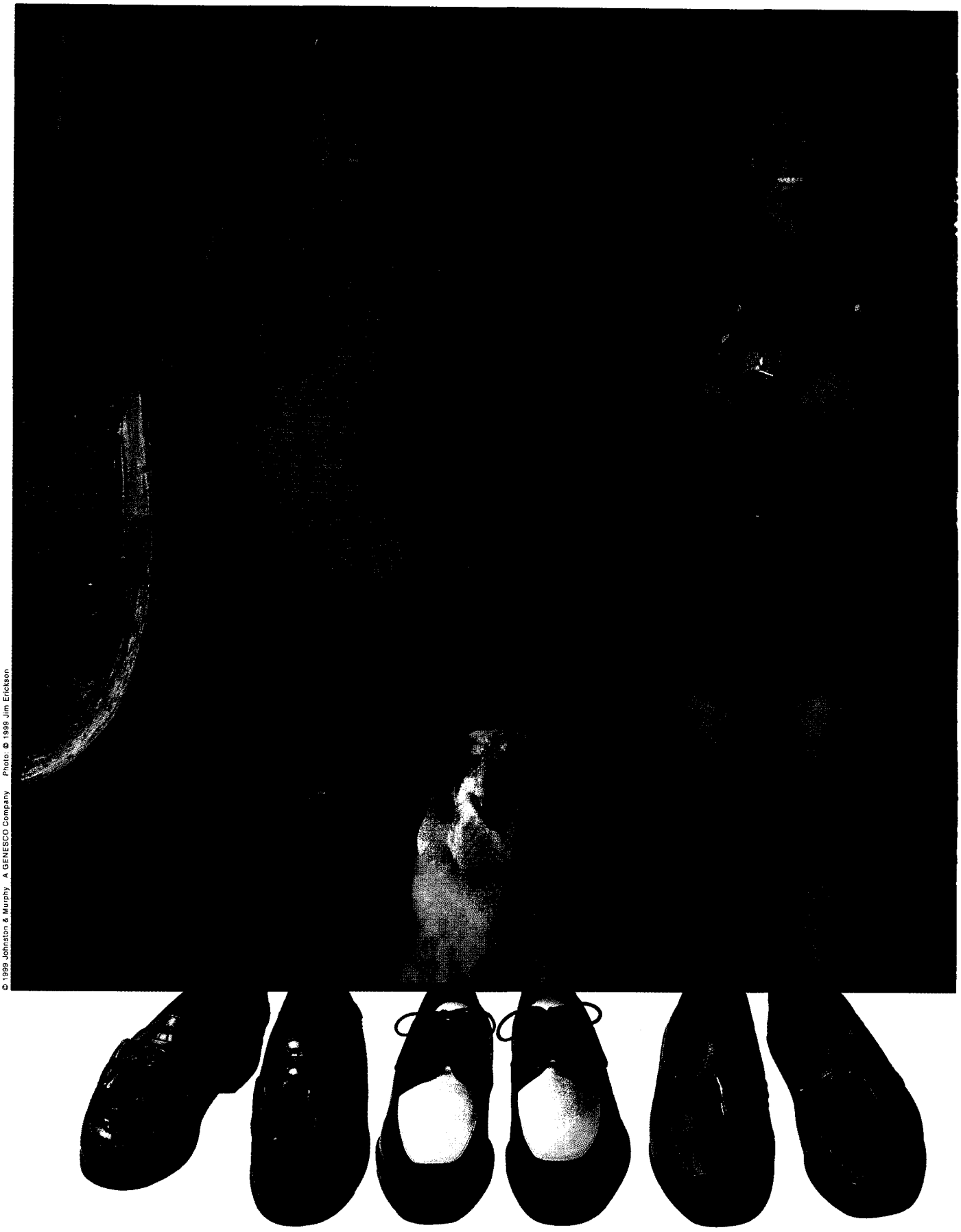

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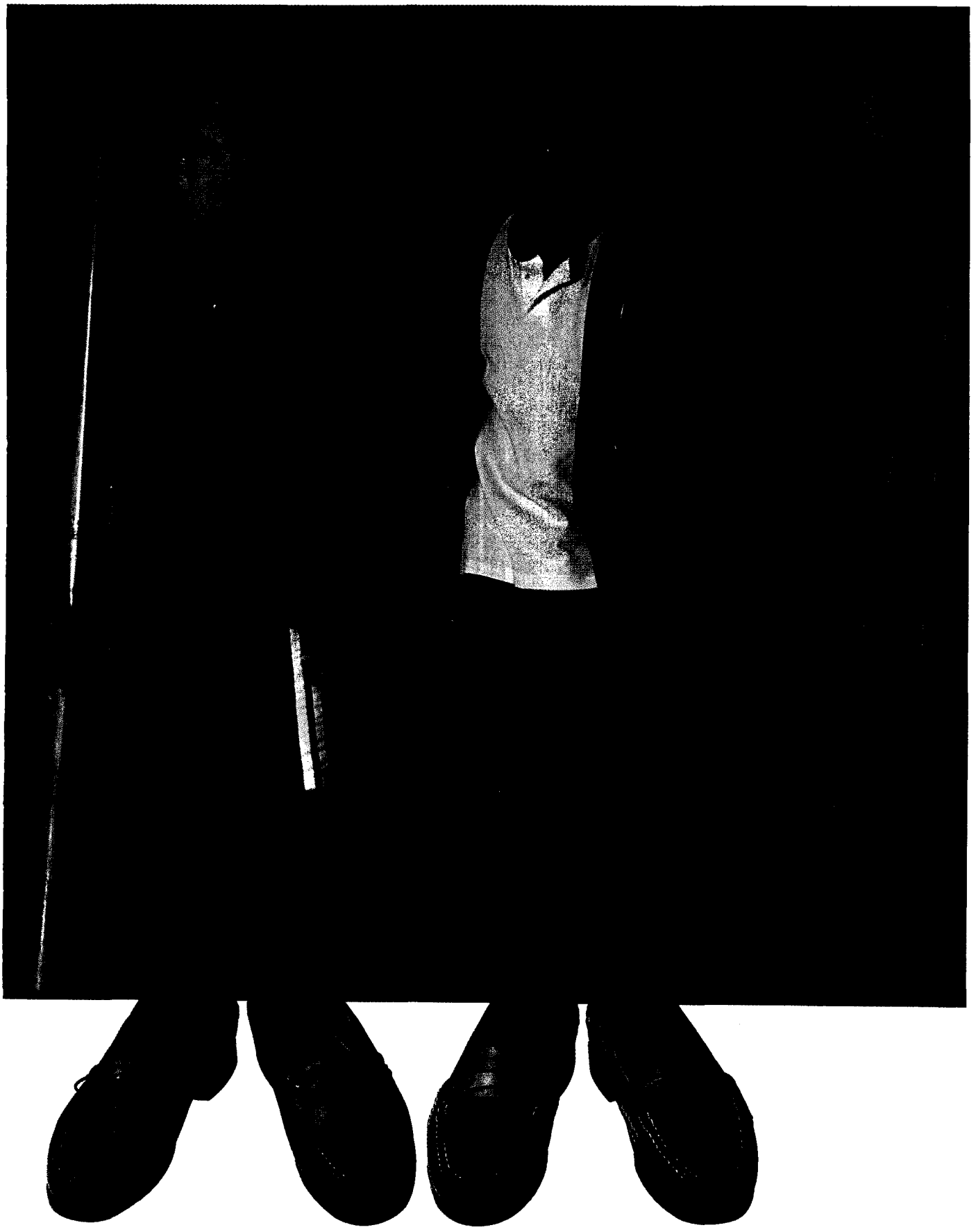

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■ LETTERS ■

MORALIZING

The extent to which Ramesh Ponnuru ("Public Judgment," March 22) distorted my *American Spectator* article on the state of America's moral health calls into question his other assertions. Mr. Ponnuru says I "ignored" the "dramatic" drop in teen sex, but his adjectives are more impressive than the data he doesn't supply. According to the Alan Guttmacher Institute, a full analysis of teen sex in the 1990s shows "more of a leveling off than a drop." I was not "grumbling" that "welfare rolls are down," but praising the fact. And I did not write that crime fell owing "only" to increased incarceration, but gave a litany of reasons.

But what is more disturbing is the tendency of a strain of conservatism to simplistically dismiss real concern—as Mr. Ponnuru does—as "carping," "complaining," and "grumbling." Edmund Burke, Russell Kirk, Richard Weaver, and Allan Bloom all used more desperate-sounding rhetoric than I do or than do the other conservatives Mr. Ponnuru lumps together. What Alasdair MacIntyre describes as our failure to find a rational justification for morality is a cause for concern. Pope John Paul II recently voiced concern about the "collapse of rationalist optimism." Is he too a grumbling pessimist?

A magazine founded to stand athwart history can hardly object to those who are troubled by elements of the march of "progress." It is helpful to remember that, in one sense, conservatism is a losing game: distinct traditions, customs, and habits are continually fading, and no amount of pom-pom thrashing can alter that.

And just for the record, no amount of rationalization from Mr. Ponnuru or anyone else can change one fact: At an earlier time, as a matter of honor, Clinton would be gone.

Brian Brown
New York, N.Y.

It is true (as I have written in these pages) that Clinton would be gone if the morals of, say, the early '60s still prevailed; and that this marks a moral and cultural decline. But it can be true that our morals are better than they were in 1993 and that they are worse than they were in 1961—just as it can also be true that our intellectual and cultural life has suffered for 300 years from the rise of the strand of Enlightenment thinking that is the target of the eminences Mr. Brown mentions. (Some of Kirk's and Weaver's most eloquent jeremiads were written, after all, in the '50s.) Mr. Brown conflates all these issues.

The question before us is whether our morals are declining today. In many respects they are not. The proportion of teenage girls waiting until after turning 20 to have sex rose by 11 percent between 1988 and 1995; the proportion of boys waiting until after high school rose by about 30 percent between 1990 and 1997. After decades of steady declines, I'd call that dramatic. Why the research arm of Planned Parenthood disagrees is a mystery to me. No, it's not a "grand remoralization." But it is an improvement. Since when did conservatives expect things to get better overnight? And speaking of carping: By "only," I meant "merely," not "solely." Lighten up. —RP

AUTO EROTICA

Steven Hayward's piece on the fight against sprawl ("Suburban Legends," March 22) was well argued and succinct. As regards automobile traffic, however, it is important to recognize that not all criticism of cars has come from Naderites and environmental extremists.

Indeed, the strain of traditionalist conservatism embraced by Russell Kirk and Richard Weaver was ever skeptical of technological progress. Kirk even referred to the automobile as "a mechanical Jacobin, overthrowing dominations and powers, breaking the cake of custom, running over oldfangled manners and morals, making the very air difficult to breathe."

I mention this not to encourage the Al Gores of the world (heaven forbid), but to call attention to the potential diversity of conservative responses to such matters. A conservative environmentalism rooted in respect for tradition as well as friendliness toward the free market is vitally needed in this debate.

Jeff McAlister
Longview, Tex.

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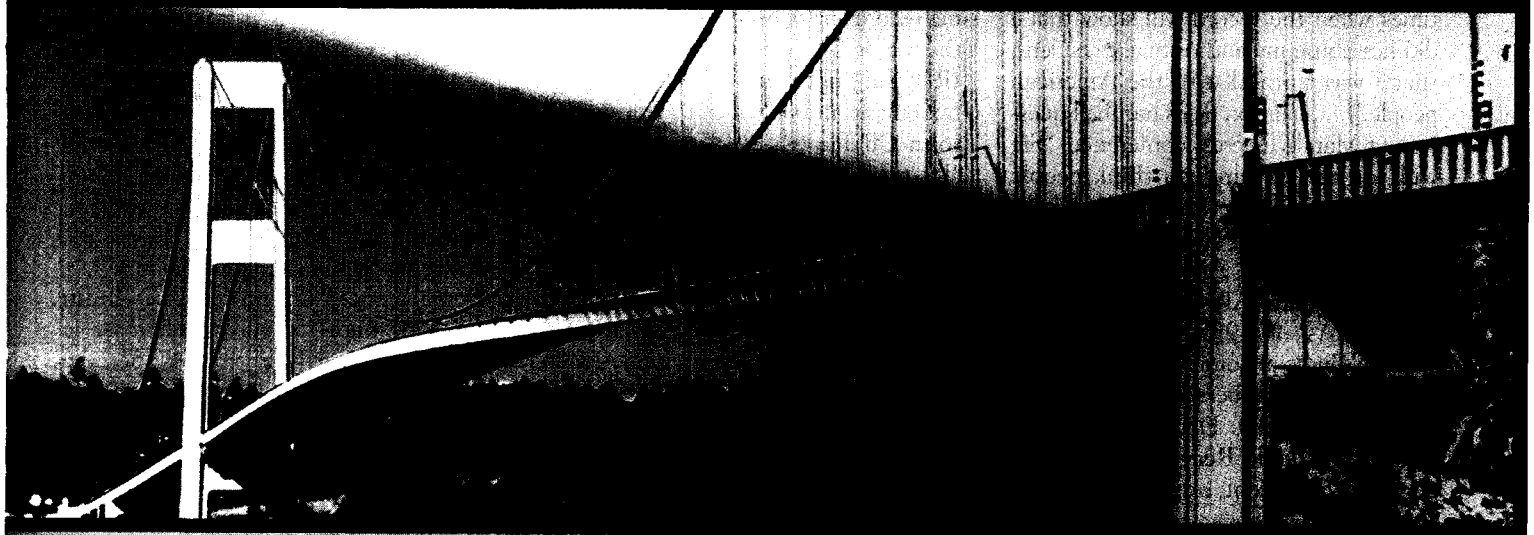

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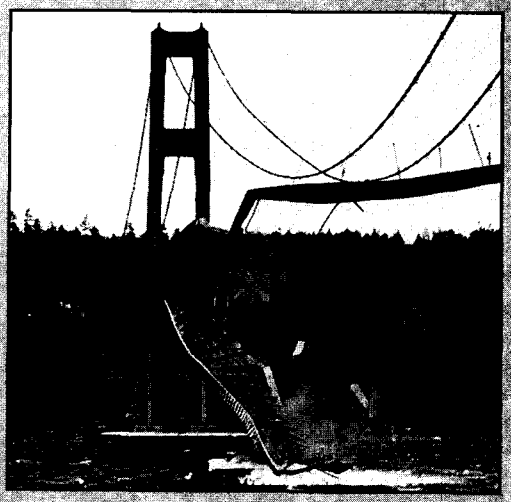

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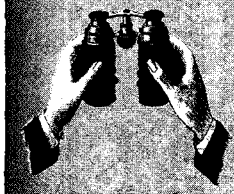

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■ FOR THE RECORD ■

■ **President Clinton**, answering a reporter's question on whether his "legacy will be about lying": "There will be the hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of times when the record will show that I did not abuse my authority as president, that I was truthful with the American people." . . . Clinton faces hardball question at March 19 press conference: "Sir, will you tell us why you think people have been so mean to you? Is it a conspiracy? Is it a plan? They treat you worse than they treated **Abe Lincoln**." . . . Liberal group Alliance for Justice reports: As of 1997, 36 percent of Clinton's judicial nominees were millionaires, and the numbers are increasing (in 1998, 43 percent). Figures for **George Bush** and **Ronald Reagan** were 32 percent and 21 percent, respectively.

■ In Iowa, Vice President **Al Gore** reveals what his father, a senator, taught him while they lived on Embassy Row: "He taught me how to clean out hog waste with a shovel and a hose. He taught me how to clear land with a double-bladed ax. He taught me how to plow a steep hillside with a team of mules. He taught me how to take up hay all day long in the hot sun." . . . In *Washington Post*/ABC News poll, 56 percent describe vice president as "very" or "somewhat" boring. . . . **George W. Bush** hires pro-life conservative **Michael J. Gerson** as chief speechwriter and senior policy advisor to presidential campaign. . . . Former Christian Coalition legislative director **Marshall Wittmann** joins **McCain** campaign as unofficial advisor. . . . Perhaps worried about conservative criticism of his views on campaign-finance reform and tobacco, McCain writes in fundraising letter, "I hope you'll make it clear to every Republican that anyone who engages in destructive negative campaigning or runs attack ads against fellow Republicans forfeits your support." . . . **Jesse Jackson** announces he won't run for president. . . . Puerto Rican governor **Pedro Rossello**, once touted by pro-statehood Republicans in Congress as evidence island would elect conservatives to Washington, signs up to run Gore's presidential campaign in the commonwealth.

■ National Taxpayers Union president **John Berthoud**, on release of group's latest congressional scorecard: "After sobering up to fiscal reality in 1995, voting records have been steadily falling off the wagon." . . . Sen. **George Voinovich** (R., Ohio) offers amendment to strip all tax cuts from budget. . . . Retiring Sen. **John Chafee** (R., R.I.) on the Senate: "It's traditional to say it's become more nasty and more partisan and more biting. I don't think that's true." . . . Rep. **Ellen Tauscher** (D., Calif.), describing success of House "civility retreat" in Hershey, Pa.: "People were crying." . . . New York Mets All-Star catcher **Mike Piazza** reportedly interested in running for Congress as a Republican after he retires from baseball. . . . San Francisco mayor **Willie Brown** backs program to

"Hey, aren't you the guy who testified against us at the congressional hearing?"

give beggars credit-card machines for high-tech panhandling.

■ **Ward Connerly** launches anti-racial-preferences initiative in Florida, releases poll showing 83 percent public support. . . . **Ron K. Unz**, author of last year's anti-bilingual-education proposition in California, begins ballot drive for campaign-finance limits in state races and an independent commission for congressional redistricting. . . . Conservatives in Massachusetts move to form Constitution Party to combat what leader **Scott Whiteman** calls "liberal Republicanism" embodied by Gov. **Paul Cellucci**. . . . "This is the tobacco litigation of the next century," says lawyer **Katya Komisaruk** after filing class-action lawsuit against CIA and Justice Department for destroying inner-city neighborhoods through drug trafficking. . . . U.S. district judge **James Paine** rules that broadcasters aren't liable for incorrect weather predictions. Decision stemmed from suit against Weather Channel by relatives of a drowned Florida fisherman. . . . Former House Speaker **Newt Gingrich** joins American Enterprise Institute as senior fellow. . . . Merrill Lynch chief economist **Bruce Steinberg**: "American consumers are supporting the world economy on their broad shoulders." . . . Department of Interior analyst **Indur Goklany** notes 10 percent increase in global food supplies and 47 percent decline in food prices between 1960 and 1993, despite 80 percent increase in world population.

■ In closed-door hearings, Gen. **Charles Wilhelm**, commander of U.S. Southern Command, recommends pulling American troops out of Haiti. . . . **Lawrence K. Gershwin**, CIA's top technology officer, believes only eight nations are ready for Y2K computer bug: Bermuda, Britain, Canada, Japan, Mexico, Singapore, Thailand, and United States. . . . Japanese destroyers fire "warning shots" at suspected North Korean spy ships in Japanese waters. . . . Paraguay plunged into turmoil following ambush and assassination of vice president **Luis Maria Argaña**, a bitter rival of former president **Raúl Cubas**. . . . Libya "indicts" nine Reagan administration officials, including late CIA director **William Casey**, for 1986 bombing of Tripoli. . . . U.N. withdraws peacekeepers from Angola, ending third failed mission there. . . . Despite forced resignations over corruption charges, Britain, Belgium, and other countries consider reappointing commissioners. . . . Archbishop of York **David Hope** tells friends he will resign if Church of England decides to consecrate female bishops. . . . *Le Monde* says France, with two million drunks, has most in Europe.

■ **Jay Leno**, on applause at beginning of *Tonight Show*: "Wow! I haven't heard an ovation like that since the hookers found out the Democrats are holding their convention here in L.A.!" **NR**

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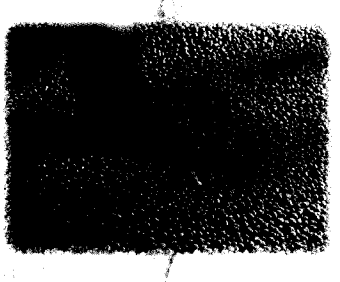

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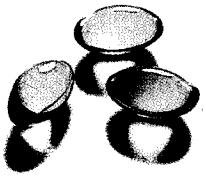

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THE WEEK

■ President Clinton recently sent cigars to Senators Lott and Byrd. Our advice to the would-be smokers: Skip the surgeon general's warning and go straight to the Starr report.

■ Congress made it official U.S. policy to deploy a missile-defense system as soon as the technology is ready. A similar attempt had failed last year because of stiff opposition from Secretary of Defense William Cohen and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Hugh Shelton. This time the Pentagon stayed silent, knowing that the Rumsfeld Commission and North Korean missile tests had made the case for SDI more compelling than ever. Indeed, the White House even endorsed the bill after winning two face-saving amendments. The debate was notable for the hysteria of the bill's media critics, who seemed unable to accept that Ronald Reagan might have been right all along. Among working politicians, the liberal position on missile defense is now indefensible.

■ Jesse Jackson announced he will not run for president in 2000. His announcement testified to the exhaustion of the Left, to the Democrats' desperate drive for unity, and to Jackson's low price of sale (all Clinton had to do, as far as we know, is give him a plane, call him his special envoy to Africa, and let him brag about their face time on television). But it is also, and less happily, a sign that the Left may be leaving politics for the greener pastures of corporate America. CEOs are easily mau-maued in an age of diversity training, and they have more cash to dispense than can be extracted from Congress. Jackson has successfully shaken down Wall Street; two years ago, he pocketed $2 million from Viacom in exchange for the end of a lawsuit against it. The Left may give up on getting people's votes, but it is still eager to take other people's money.

■ Jack Kevorkian was convicted for his televised murder of Thomas Youk, a sufferer from Lou Gehrig's disease. Kevorkian chose to conduct his own defense, and so at last the hubris that led him into a career of taking life put him in jail. The moral statement of the verdict is diminished by the fact that the jury found him guilty only of second-degree murder (how could a spectacle filmed for 60 *Minutes* not be premeditated?). The bogus rhetoric of mercy, which allowed him to evade convictions for assisting suicide, evidently softened his punishment even when he himself tripped the fatal switch. But at least despairing patients will be safe from his ministrations. Kevorkian has said that he will starve himself to death in jail, so pro-lifers must debate the question whether to send him food packages or let him, without help from others, take his own medicine.

■ *Meet the Press* hosted David Duke, who is seeking (with slight chance of success) Bob Livingston's congressional seat. Duke and Tim Russert had the usual edifying discussion—is the Talmud like *Mein Kampf*, and so forth. But the main point of the show seems to have been Duke's on-screen ID: "DAVID DUKE, (R-La.)." Yes, Duke is a Republican state senator and a would-be Republican congressional candidate. But he has also been a would-be Democratic presidential candidate (1988). In fact, Duke identified himself as a Democrat more recently than he wore a Nazi uniform. Duke is an opportunistic infection, seeking any available partisan slot for publicity. If it suited him, he would run as a Libertarian, or a Perotista, and Tim Russert should say so. But as long as Duke calls himself a Republican, he will always have a home on *Meet the Press*.

■ That Democrats will seize every opportunity to brand Republicans as racist rednecks is to be expected. What is peculiar is that Republicans are going out of their way to give credence to this smear. It took a week of bad press to get Trent Lott to repudiate the Council of Conservative Citizens, a white-supremacist group he had addressed and perhaps even joined. When a resolution condemning the group was introduced in the House, Republicans objected on the demure grounds that it was wrong to "single out" the council. J. C. Watts introduced his own resolution denouncing "all those who practice or promote racism, anti-Semitism, ethnic prejudice, or religious intolerance." Democrats voted against it, and Republicans started calling them soft on racism—a too-cute spin bought by nobody. In reality, Republicans have set back their goal of attracting more blacks to the party, probably undermined Watts's ability to help them achieve it, and dragged out a damaging story for over three months and counting. All this just to protect Trent Lott?

■ After more than 257,000 Americans filed formal complaints, often through e-mail, the government dropped a proposed regulation to fight money laundering. The plan, dubbed "Know Your Customer" and endorsed by the Federal Reserve, would have required banks to keep customer profiles based on transaction patterns. Any unexpected deviation—such as a larger-than-normal deposit or withdrawal—would have forced banks to alert law-enforcement officials of the "suspicious" activity. Since criminals always figure out ways to hide their dirty work, however, ordinary citizens would have been surrendering financial privacy for no discernible benefits. Indeed, the very ineffectiveness of the regulation would probably have led to yet another privacy grab. It's a good thing Internet activists decided to be tough customers.

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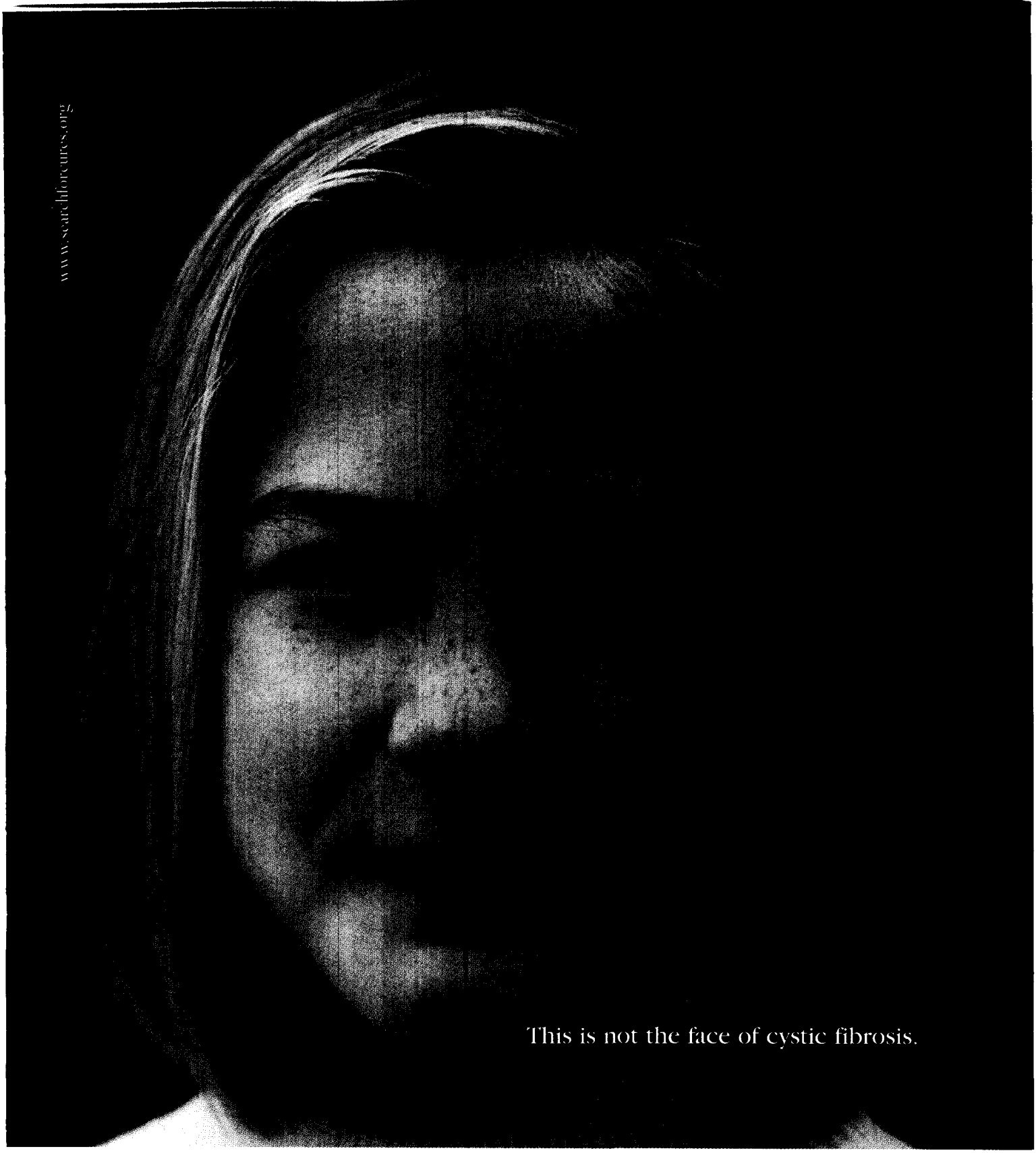

It's the face of Rachel Course, cartwheeler, violinist and an extraordinary kid. She has cystic fibrosis (CF), but it doesn't stop her from doing the things she wants to do. New medicines discovered by pharmaceutical company researchers have helped Rachel, and thousands of other CF patients, go from a life of little hope to one filled with dreams for the future. There isn't a cure for CF yet, but America's pharmaceutical companies get closer every day. So a little girl like Rachel can keep on doing what she does best. Being a kid.

America's Pharmaceutical Companies

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■ Republicans in the Florida house passed the country's first statewide school-voucher plan, with the senate expected to follow suit. Under the plan, based on Gov. Jeb Bush's campaign proposals, schools are rewarded for success; failing schools get overhauled, and their students have the option of enrolling in a better public school or receiving a scholarship to a private school. Four public schools have already been judged failures, and the number will approach 165 when heightened standards go into effect. The Bush plan has flaws, such as its restrictions on parochial schools, but it represents a willingness to take on rotten bureaucratic establishments that Bush might apply to other issues—racial preferences, for instance.

■ The federal appeals courts have been keeping themselves busy. The Sixth Circuit says that local boards of education cannot open with a prayer, but the legislature can. The Fifth Circuit says that student-led prayer is permissible at graduation ceremonies if it's nonsectarian but under no circumstances can be allowed before football games, which are "hardly the sober type of annual event that can be appropriately solemnized with a prayer." All of this, you understand, is in the Constitution. Two students at a heavily Mormon school in Idaho challenged the graduation prayer, saying it made them feel like outcasts. Is there a self-esteem clause in the First Amendment? The judges on the Ninth Circuit threw up their hands and turned the case over to a higher power—no, not that one.

■ A panel of experts at the Institute of Medicine, a branch of the National Academy of Sciences, released a study on the medical uses of marijuana, finding that it can help relieve some symptoms and side-effects of AIDS, multiple sclerosis, and chemotherapy. This was no news to doctors and patients, who have been turning informally to pot for years, nor to the people in eight states who, by hefty margins, have approved recent medical-marijuana referendums. It did come as a surprise to the Office of National Drug Control Policy, which commissioned the study after years of discouraging research and belittling all accounts of first-hand experience. The panel pointed out that pot smoke is even more toxic than tobacco smoke. But there are sick people whose problems (e.g., inability to eat) are more serious than potential lung damage. Washington should stop demonizing substances (an attitude as irrational as pot-heads' worship of the weed) and adopt the common sense of scientists and voters.

■ Cuba's All-Stars bowed to the Baltimore Orioles, 3–2, in 11 innings in Havana; the powerful Latino hurlers and batsmen go to Camden Yards for the return engagement in May; and what is lost? Nothing but truth. Castro was rewarded with a PR coup at one of the most repressive stages of his regime. Average Cubans gained little—the Communists controlled the guest list. And probably the first string won't be sent to Baltimore, since too many of them would defect. Havana deserves a World Series—once Castro is safely in the South of France.

■ Lawrence Kudlow tells us two underreported facts about Japan: Its stock market has performed better than any other big country's in the year to date, and, not coincidentally, its taxes are going down. The top personal-income-tax rate is scheduled to drop from 50 to 37 percent, and corporate tax rates are also being cut. The capital-gains tax on land and the securities-transaction tax both "lock in" unproductive arrangements of assets; the former is to be reduced, the latter abolished. The yen started to appreciate after the tax-cut package was first announced. After a decade of destructive tax increases and futile Keynesian public-spending splurges, could the sun be starting to rise again?

■ On March 24, England's highest court decided that Augusto Pinochet could not be extradited from Britain for crimes committed before 1988, the year Britain signed an international convention banning torture. This excludes the bloodiest period of Pinochet's crackdown against Chile's Leninist Left, and he may now be able to block extradition. But the principle has been established that controversial leaders from any country are vulnerable to arrest *anywhere* for alleged offenses *anywhere*. Reagan over Grenada? Kissinger over Indochina? Or, for that matter, Clinton over Sudan? If the administration is at all worried about this, the time to speak up is now.

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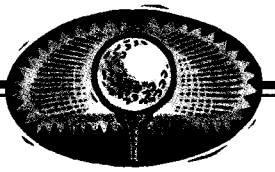

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■ A study finding discrimination against female tenured professors at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's School of Science has been much hyped. Institute president Charles Vest said it made him "sit bolt upright in my chair." Feel free to slump again. Ignoring younger women on the faculty, who weren't complaining of unequal treatment, the report focused on the 22 women belonging to a tenured faculty of 274. The sample shrank further when "several" of those 22 reported no problems. The study admits that any discrimination reported by the remaining handful could be "ascribed to . . . special circumstances." And since salaries weren't released, the study could suggest only "possible inequities." If this report is any indication of what passes for science at the school, maybe it's the students' parents who should be sitting bolt upright.

■ The United Methodist Church suspended the Rev. Greg Dell, a Chicago minister, for performing a homosexual marriage. In 1996, the Church's "Book of Discipline" added the sentence: "Ceremonies that celebrate homosexual unions shall not be conducted by our ministers and shall not be conducted in our churches"; and in August 1998 the Church's highest court ruled that the sentence had the force of law. So the decision was no surprise. What is interesting is that it comes from a denomination conspicuous for its middleness. The consensus of Protestant opinion on gay marriage seems to be in the direction of traditional teaching. But the pressures for change, issuing from the surrounding culture, will continue. The likely result will be schisms, possibly leading to a liberal Church of Gayness. That should satisfy believers all around. The Almighty, as always, will have the last word.

■ For over 25 years William Gribbin has been one of the most powerful weapons in the conservative political arsenal. If you have never heard of him, there's a reason: He wanted it that way. Out of the media spotlight, Bill operated as a brilliant policy maven, strategist, and—most important—the writer of numerous Republican platforms. Alas, all good things must end . . . sort of: Gribbin, a top aide to Senate majority leader Trent Lott, and a staff veteran of Sen. James Buckley, Rep. Henry Hyde, President Reagan, and Vice President Quayle, retires next week. He promises, however, to stay involved in politics—behind the scenes, of course.

■ A member of the Norwegian royal family was rebuked for going to the hospital nearest the palace, instead of the one in the family's official home district, as the rules of Norwegian socialized medicine require. Things have changed since the days of the sagas, when kings with nicknames like Broadaxe spent more time putting people in hospitals.

Medicare Explained

Clinton needs Gephardt as Speaker.
Gephardt, who's short by six seats,
Needs a big stick to encourage
Prime-time Republican bleats.
Medicare fits the description—
So sorry, Senator Breaux.
Bonior will hold hands with seniors.
Gore will sing hymns in the snow.

—W. H. von Dreele

KOSOVO

Don't Look Back

At no point during the last year has President Clinton approached the crisis in Kosovo with the requisite seriousness. What can be said of a man willing to compare his former negotiating partner, Slobodan Milosevic, to Adolf Hitler and then invite him back to the table? After, of course, Milosevic's military has been "degraded"—whatever that means. The administration has once again stated its military objective so vaguely that its policy cannot fail. But for the same reason it cannot succeed. Already the administration is beginning to wobble about whether Milosevic must sign the Rambouillet accord. He should accept the "framework" of the accord, administration officials say, or "reverse course" in some general way.

Defining realistic objectives requires sorting out the moral from the strategic considerations. Milosevic may be as malicious as Hitler, but he poses no threat to the rest of Europe; he is a local tyrant responsible for a local horror. (The sloppy grandiosity of the president's rhetoric—we have to go into Kosovo because "everybody ought to be lifted up and brought together"—is one of the more unnerving dimensions of the present crisis.) Even the best outcome of our intervention, an independent Kosovo, would have its price. After so much slaughter, ethnic Albanians in the region might well seek a unitary state, comprising at least Kosovo, Albania, and parts of Macedonia, and thus trigger a new round of Balkan disintegration.

But the price of backing down now would be much higher. It is not merely a question of whether the United States and the entire Atlantic alliance are to continue to command the world's respect. The West's cohesion, too, would be endangered since failure would unleash recriminations among the allies and accelerate European efforts to create new security institutions free of American influence. Now that we have committed, our strategic interest is vital. We must achieve unequivocal victory.

Republicans have been understandably reluctant to support a poorly designed military action, let alone one executed by so unworthy a commander in chief. For this reluctance, they have been widely labeled isolationists. The charge is unfair. But too many Republicans have borrowed the language of the Left in making their case against Clinton's policy. We do not elect

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Republican senators to lecture about dictators' sovereign rights under international law. For the most part, however, it has been leading Republicans—such as Jesse Helms, John McCain, Richard Lugar, and Mitch McConnell—who have been calling for an objective that might make a sustainable difference in the Balkans: the isolation, weakening, and ultimate removal of Milosevic. This, and not the administration's hope of bringing the tyrant back to the table, should be our goal.

Air power alone cannot achieve that objective, or even the objective of "stopping the killing." Milosevic has only accelerated his savagery on the ground, driving ethnic Albanians out of Kosovo with new fury. But with the administration ruling out the only plausible forms of escalation—sending ground troops or, better, arming the Kosovar Albanians—NATO now flirts with failure. The Russians have injected themselves as mediators, and "counterproposals" are beginning to spring up. Pressures to halt the bombing and negotiate will be enormous—among our allies, in the media and Congress, and even probably within the administration. Then Milosevic could string out the diplomacy for months—after which we'd have a much harder time restoring our coalition, our determination, and our leverage. Saddam Hussein showed him how.

CONGRESS

Confidence Game

THE temptation for conservatives will be to attack the budget resolution written by John Kasich and just passed by congressional Republicans. There is much to criticize: Congress did not identify a single program to be terminated; it made a vague promise of $800 billion in tax cuts over ten years, with most of the cuts coming late in that period. Republicans persist in the delusion that they can impress voters by outspending the president on education.

The budget does, however, maintain the spending caps from the 1997 budget deal, which is more than was expected even a month ago. And to get the Republican conference on record as supporting large tax cuts, however undefined, is no small accomplishment. Taking Social Security off budget robbed the Democrats of their most effective talking point on tax cuts. New Jersey senator Frank Lautenberg, the ranking Democrat on the budget committee, was reduced to sputtering that tax cuts would prevent all the domestic-spending increases that Democrats favor. That's an argument Republicans can win.

Republicans hope that passing the budget on time, for a change, will give them an air of competence and diligence. But their most important political achievement has been to change, not their public image, but their image of themselves. As our Kate O'Beirne reports (page 28), congressional Republicans under Speaker Denny Hastert are feeling confident again after three years of confusion and retreat. Recent weeks have seen a modest victory on education—Republicans succeeded in giving states more flexibility in using federal aid—and a big win on missile defense. Democrats, meanwhile, have not found their footing in the post-Lewinsky world. Their lack of confidence in their leader, Bill Clinton, makes the Juanita Broaddrick story and the administration's lurches in the Balkans all the more demoralizing.

The Republicans' current posture is best characterized as an aggressive defense. It is well and good for them to begin their political recovery by focusing on wiping out liabilities. But they must follow through by actually passing tax cuts and controlling spending later this year. And conservatives will expect at some point to see Republicans exhibit the same cohesion and aggressiveness on offense as they have on defense. Can the party mount a coherent, conservative challenge to administration policies on everything from foreign policy to tort reform? Can it devise a politics both principled and smart, as it signally failed to do at its last high point? The answer to these questions will tell us more about Republican prospects in 2000 than the poll numbers of any presidential candidate.

CULTURE WATCH

Pedophilia Chic

ARE children the last frontier of the sexual revolution? Dr. Laura Schlessinger, the socially conservative radio host, posed this question when a paper published by the American Psychological Association (APA) came to her notice. The three authors, all academics, concluded that "willing encounter[s]" between adults and children should "be labeled simply 'adult-child sex,' a value-neutral term." Adult/adolescent encounters that produced "positive reactions" would similarly be labeled "scientifically" as "adult-adolescent sex." Dr. Laura, reading such stuff, labeled herself "scared." At the same time, Calvin Klein had to yank a billboard from Times Square that showed toddlers romping in underwear. Coming from J. C. Penney, the ad would have seemed wholesome; coming from Klein, whose previous ad campaigns have featured young teens simulating heroin addiction and post-coital blues, it carried a whiff of degeneracy—unless, as the APA academics implied, "adult-child sex" is "value-neutral."

For years critics of gay liberation have pointed to the movement's tolerance of NAMBLA, the North-American Man Boy Love Association. The normlessness of gay life prevents all but a handful of gay pundits from condemning NAMBLA for what it is—a collection of sickos masking their depravity as the glory that was Greece. The poet and gay propagandist Allen Ginsberg stuck up for NAMBLA doggedly, even though he said he had never had a lover younger than 15; one of the APA authors, Robert Bauserman, wrote a 1990 article for the *Journal of Homosexuality* in which he dismissed the "taboo" against "man-boy sexual relationships" as "biased."

But even as most pedophilia occurs between sexes, so the major seepage of pedophile chic is into the world of heterosexual imagery. An overt artifact like the movie version of *Lolita* is only the iceberg's tip. Models get younger and younger; older models are made up to look younger, or are picked for body

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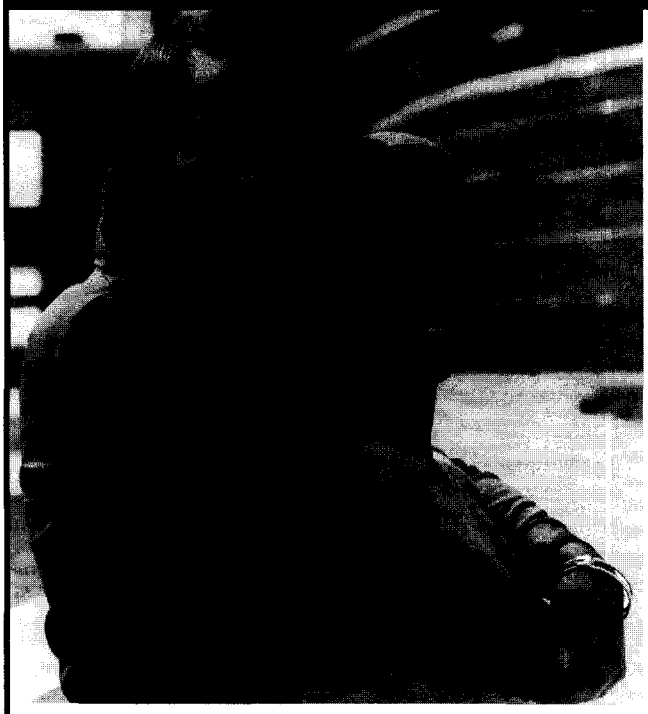
What's a *computer lab* housing project A lot.



"First, my daughter was taking computer classes... then she pulled me in... I learned so much there, I ended up with a great new job."

People might not expect to find a state-of-the-art computer lab in a housing project in northeast Washington, D.C. But it's the centerpiece of rehabilitated housing in D.C.'s Edgewood Terrace community. Created by the Community Preservation and Development Corporation, and made possible by a Microsoft® Connected Learning grant, the lab provides computer literacy classes, job training and kids' programs for Sharon Pringle, her daughter Ashley, and hundreds of local residents.

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types that suggest early teenage. The boyish Kate Moss would have failed as a pinup on a B-52 fuselage, yet in the Nineties she is a supermodel. A recent issue of *Rolling Stone* featured a heavy-breathing profile of 17-year-old pop star Britney Spears. "Is Spears bubblegum jailbait, jaded crossover diva or malleable Stepford teen? Who knows?" Everybody knows: all of the above.

Much of the leering interest in extreme youth is anti-womanly, and anti-reproductive. If fertility is a distracting consequence of sex, then the erotic ideal must be at or before the line of puberty. It is impossible to imagine an earth mother like Sophia Loren being squeezed into such a perverse cultural model. The youth-obsession also ironically coincides with demented witch-hunts of (often imaginary) child molesters. In times when everything is up for grabs, it is easy to hit the extremes, hard to recover the mean.

But the principal allure of this particular desire is moral. F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote that the spectacle of young people in the fast lane is attractive not because of their innocence, but because of their loss of innocence. Debauched elders warm themselves by burning illusions and inhibitions as before a fire. Happy Fitzgerald, to be writing only of flappers and drunken collegians. Once that territory was mapped and conquered, all that is left to the Nineties is to push back towards childhood.

■ NOTES & ASIDES ■

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: Remember when you asked the question, "Does Lowell Weicker make you sick?" The answer, of course, was a resounding *yes*.

Well, I have some additional questions. Here are a few. You may have some also.

Does Orrin Hatch make you sick?
Does Susan Collins make you sick?
Does Joe Lieberman make you sick?
Does Pat Moynihan make you sick?
Does Robert Byrd make you sick?
May the Lord help us!

Yours truly,
Lodwick H. Alford
Sea Island, Ga.

Dear Mr. Alford: But surely you fiddle with attributes that are uniquely Senator Weicker's. Others can make you uneasy, disgusted, disappointed, bemused. But only Lowell Weicker could make you *sick*.

Cordially, WFB

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: Can anything be done to encourage competent writers and editors to use the term "American Republic" rather than "American Democracy"?

This may seem trivial, but using "democracy" helps the poll-watchers in their current egregious assault on the Constitution. If they went to the ultimate absurdity, they would scrap the Constitution, disband Congress, and instruct the president to govern in accord with the latest polls.

The Founders rejected the tyranny of a king as well as the tyranny of a democracy in favor of a constitutional republic. Although democratically elected, the members of Congress and the president are expected to be informed statesmen who will insulate the nation from the chaos that the least-qualified can create.

Can NATIONAL REVIEW take the lead in reminding all of us that we pledge allegiance to the flag and to the republic for which it stands?

Sincerely,
Richard S. MacQuown
Pittsburgh, Pa.

Dear Mr. MacQuown: The answer, in short form, is no: Nothing can be done to revive the distinction you speak of. A republic acknowledges the res publica, the public thing. To be distinguished from non-public things. Democracy sweeps over the whole lot, as frequently justified. But usage is a democratic instrument. Sorry about that.

Cordially, WFB

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: In his excellent biography of Ronald Reagan, Dinesh D'Souza several times uses *famously*, as in "President Clinton famously said, 'I did not have sex with that woman, Miss Lewinsky.'" As a logolept, you will agree, I believe, that *famously* is an adverb and as such must tell *how* something is done. Surely, Mr. D'Souza didn't mean that something was said "in a famous manner," although the statement itself might be famous—or, in the case of Mr. Clinton's, infamous.

I had never seen *famously* used as Mr. D'Souza used it, but since reading his book I have seen the usage in NATIONAL REVIEW, *Human Events*, on the editorial page of the *Wall Street Journal*, and in Bill Bennett's *Death of Outrage*. I have heard it uttered by George Will, Fred Barnes, and John Kasich. Now, what do all these have in common? They are conservative. Does this mean that we conservatives now have our own cliché, as do the liberals—e.g., "mean-spirited," "rise to the level of . . ."?

Best wishes,
Richard Dowis
Waleska, Ga.

Dear Mr. Dowis: No, I think here you are being too formal. Consider, *As Richard legendarily said* or *Henry was infamously acquainted with the red-light district of the city*.

Cordially, WFB

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: I came across a most apt passage recently; it reads:

The demand that God should forgive such a man [an unrepentant man] while he remains what he is, is based upon a confusion between condoning and forgiving. To condone an evil is simply to ignore it, to treat it as if it were good. But forgiveness needs to be accepted as well as offered if it is to be complete: and a man who admits no guilt can accept no forgiveness.

(C. S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*, First Touchstone Edition, p. 109, 1996.)

Evidently, the confusion persists.

Best regards,
Jeffrey M. Heinzmann
Fishers, Ind.

—WFB

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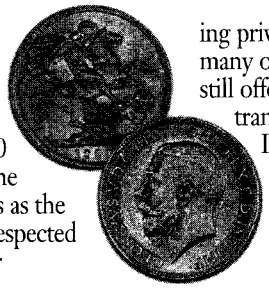

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Absolute Privacy

If you value your privacy — an important asset in today's world — then the British Sovereign could prove to be one of your most important investment tools.

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■ FOREIGN POLICY ■

The Meaning of Kosovo

When bombs must talk.

DAVID PRYCE-JONES

In Kosovo today the Serbian army and paramilitary police are committing atrocities on the most terrible scale. Nothing comparable has been seen in Europe since the heyday of Hitler's *Wehrmacht* and the SS. The victims are ethnic Albanians, almost all of them Muslim. They are being persecuted and killed for what they are, not for anything they have done. Their towns and villages are burning. Teachers are shot in front of their pupils. A mother had to watch while her husband, a well-known civil-rights lawyer, and her two sons were taken from the house to be murdered. Hundreds of thousands of Kosovar Albanians have fled for their lives. And we do not yet know anything like the full extent of the horror.

Equally depressing, Serbs are demonstrating in many cities of the world, from Paris and Moscow all the way to Melbourne, to express approval of what is being done in their name. The man almost solely responsible is Slobodan Milosevic, president of Serbia, and Serbs now seem to support him unanimously, without reservation. They do not notice their victims. Inverting and even insulting reality, they transfer the guilt for these Serbian genocidal deeds to the very NATO alliance that is trying to prevent them. They are daubing swastikas on portraits of President Clinton and on the walls of American embassies. Nationalistic fantasies have overcome their reason, just as similar fantasies once swayed German crowds to applaud Hitler during a career that could only end in destroying them too.

The former Yugoslavia, now a lost country, was a hodgepodge of peoples living somewhat claustrophobically side by side. Received opinion has it that they had loved to hate one another

Slobodan Milosevic by Roman Genn

down the centuries. In fact, the usual modern ideologies had broken up what used to be a settled existence, converting individuals into masses. After the war, Marshal Tito had imposed Communism on Yugoslavia. According to its doctrine, the ideological identity of Communism was so supreme that nationality and ethnicity were secondary, at the level of folklore. Holding all the constituent peoples down, the secret police could not hold them together. Communism was a fantasy too, and there was a price to be paid when the country was at last rid of it.

Big Brother, the Soviet Union, offers a comparison. Its constituent peoples are far more numerous, and they are also seeking a path to their various identities. Civil war is open or latent in many areas of the old Soviet Union. The Chechens put the post-Soviet Russian Federation on the spot with the demand for a nation-state of their own. President Yeltsin had the response of the career Communist that he is and sent in the tanks. Sixty thousand people were killed, hundreds of thousands fled; Chechnya is now wrecked and its political status uncertain, still up for grabs.

Things did not have to turn out so cruelly. In the former Czechoslovakia, President Vaclav Havel set the opposite example. A dissident and a democrat by conviction, he did not want the union between Czechs and Slovaks to be dissolved. The Slovaks insisted, though, and he ceded with sorrow, not anger. It is possible, then, to throw off the Communist fantasy peacefully. If Czechs and Slovaks see fit, they can reunite one day.

Yugoslavia began the meltdown into its constituent peoples in 1989. Milosevic could have chosen to follow the example either of Yeltsin or of Havel. Tito's heir, and ultimately Lenin's too, he was another career Communist, with a temperament that considers compromise and power-sharing to be evidence of weakness. Aiming for supremacy and central control, to be exercised exclusively by Serbs, he therefore attacked the neighboring peoples at all points of the compass. Slovenes and Croats were able to defend themselves and gain independence. Gypsies and the Hungarian minority have fled. The future of Macedonia and Montenegro is in the balance. After suffering a specially vicious onslaught, Bosnia is now a sort of U.N. protectorate. Kosovo may become another sort of NATO protectorate.

The one certain achievement of Milosevic's continuous violence is the extinction of all possibility of putting together a federation to replace Communist Yugoslavia. "Ethnically cleansed," the Serbia that he has created will not be worth having. As with Hitler's racially pure state of Germany, the hatred and fear that it has aroused contain the elements of its eventual destruction.

The West also faced a choice. It would have been possible, even easy, to assert that whatever goes on in another country is nobody else's business. Benighted foreigners, it can be maintained, go in for such things as ethnic cleansing, and fellow feeling for the victims is mere sentimentality. Besides, intervention was always likely to be ineffective, a moral gesture at best, counterproductive at worst. Ground troops alone could protect the Kosovar Albanians, and they are not

Mr. Pryce-Jones is a London-based scholar and journalist.

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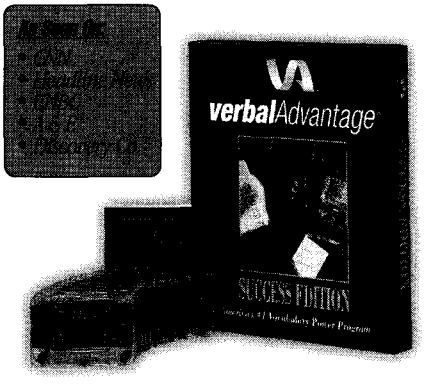

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available. Long-range bombing would (and did) give Milosevic the opportunity first to throw out the Western monitors already in place and then to fall on the Kosovar Albanians with full savagery while nobody was watching.

Over the past two years or so, Western leaders proved unable to make up their minds. Was this an issue for the U.N. or for NATO? Could Ambassador Holbrooke whisper something enticing in Milosevic's ear? Surely the man was unwilling to go to the extreme lengths of defying them all, and so if the first ultimatum did not work, then the second would, or perhaps the third. This delay called into question the principle of intervention and has contributed to the messy improvisations of current strategy.

At the core of this issue is globalization, which has already internationalized what had been national or regional disputes. To what extent is government across the world to be based on consent or on force? Are the values of democracy universal or not? And if so, are they to be imposed or is that too extreme a paradox?

Russia and China are the two main countries criticizing NATO at present. Both face the prospect of Kosovo-type breakaways in their own populations, and they have made clear that in that event they will resort to force. Intervention by NATO against Milosevic offers a precedent that to Russia and China looks like a challenge to switch to government by consent.

The Arab world might have been expected to applaud the rescue of fellow Muslims. Its silence is particularly eloquent. Force rules there. And at the moment when Milosevic was embarking on his long campaign of murder, so was Saddam Hussein. The parallels are close.

The outcome of the NATO campaign may well be unsatisfactory. The material damage is large. Kosovo may be partitioned, the refugees may become embittered exiles. But whether through the United Nations or NATO, the West is slowly, and somewhat incoherently, evolving supranational instruments to oppose the Saddams and Milosevics who would rule by force. If the human race has unusual good fortune, government by consent may be its general lot one day. But when words cannot argue for the rule of law, then bombs must. **NR**

■ THE SCANDAL ■

Remember Whitewater?

Starr plugs away.

BYRON YORK

No one quite knows how the story got started that independent counsel Kenneth Starr was going to leave office in March. Maybe he mentioned the possibility to someone. Maybe friends floated the idea in hopes of gently nudging him back to private practice, where he would no longer be a target for the White House and media. Whatever the case, it's April, and Starr is still going to work every day. And several people familiar with his work now say they wouldn't be surprised if he stays through the end of 1999.

That's not true of some of his staff. In recent weeks, there's been a steady stream of departures among Starr's top prosecutors. That's widely known, but what's not been reported is that Starr is hiring new lawyers to replace the old. Three federal prosecutors have recently joined the office. When the personnel shuffling is over, Starr's team will be at roughly the same strength it was before extra manpower was added to deal with the Lewinsky probe. All of which means that the Whitewater office is still going strong. But there is a division of opinion—even among those most sympathetic to Starr—about whether that is a good thing.

After the Lewinsky report went to the House last September, there were some close to the office who wanted Starr to wrap up business quickly. The only cases on the plate at that time were criminal contempt charges against Susan McDougal—now being tried in Little Rock—and tax charges against Clinton crony Webster Hubbell. The Lewinsky case, at least as it applied to the president, was over, and other parts of the broader investigation—Travelgate, Filegate, large segments of Whitewater—were also complete.

But there were still other possible prosecutions. Starr's lawyers were debating whether to go forward with another charge against Hubbell, this one a genuine Whitewater indictment, focusing on his work in the fraudulent Castle Grande land deal. And they were considering indicting Julie Hiatt Steele, who stood to become the first person to face criminal charges as a result of the Lewinsky investigation.

Unlike some of Starr's major prosecution decisions in the past, there was no unanimity of opinion about what to do. Some people close to the office felt that since prosecutors had fulfilled their responsibility to investigate possible wrongdoing by the president, there was little reason to go on. Others believed that significant areas of investigation still remained. Ultimately, the pro-indictment forces won. In November, Starr's grand jury indicted Hubbell on charges of fraud, making false statements, and corruptly impeding the work of federal regulators. In January, the jury indicted Steele on charges of obstruction of justice and making false statements in connection with an alleged effort to intimidate Clinton accuser Kathleen Willey.

Steele is scheduled for trial May 3, Hubbell for June 14. Both trials are guaranteed to be controversial—the Steele case because it will revive the passions of the Lewinsky investigation, the Hubbell because it will shine a spotlight on the past business practices of First Lady (and possible Senate candidate) Hillary Rodham Clinton.

The Steele prosecution presents more than just a PR problem; it's simply not an open-and-shut case. The Hubbell indictment is much stronger. The Castle Grande deal was a sham transaction intended to conceal the deep financial problems of Jim McDougal's S&L from the federal regulators who ultimately closed it down. Hubbell is charged with lying and covering up not only his own involvement but also that of, in the words of the indictment, the "Rose Law firm's 1985–1986 billing partner"—better known as Mrs. Clinton. Though the evidence is solid, the First Lady's involvement could seriously complicate matters. She is mentioned—never

Mr. York is an investigative writer with *The American Spectator.*

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by name—more than 30 times in the Hubbell indictment, and she will likely be called to testify.

By that time, of course, she may be on the hustings in New York. How such a trial would affect the race is anyone's guess; while some Republicans welcome the idea of the First Lady's unsavory business past coming back to light, others worry that it could cut in her favor. Certainly the White House script is already written: Out-of-control prosecutor revives decades-old allegations for partisan political purposes. And just for good measure, the trial may fall around the time Congress considers whether to reauthorize the independent-counsel law. Given all that, the real question may be how the trial will affect Starr.

His office is still facing two investigations of itself. Clinton's Justice Department is itching to go after Starr for the way his prosecutors conducted the beginning of the Lewinsky probe. So far, the two sides are locked in a standoff. In addition, Starr is still waiting for the verdict of the "special master" appointed by Judge Norma Holloway Johnson to investigate the White House's claim that Starr's office improperly leaked secret grand-jury material last year. There have been rumors the investigator has concluded that no one on Starr's staff broke any laws, but if anyone knows the truth on that, he's not saying.

We do know that Starr's prosecutors vigorously denied the leaks. Take the case of the February 6, 1998, *New York Times* story that recounted the president's "We were never alone, right?" witness-coaching session with Betty Currie. Clinton lawyer David Kendall loudly accused Starr of leaking, but unsealed court papers show that Starr thinks the White House did it. Prosecutor Robert Bittman told Judge Johnson that Currie's lawyer, Lawrence Wechsler, is a longtime friend of White House counsel Charles Ruff and that the White House legal team knew Currie's story before the *Times* account was published. "There is a strong prima facie case that the president and his agents," Starr's brief argued, "are responsible for many of the alleged 'leaks.'"

Even as he defended himself in the leak probe, Starr perplexed some observers last month when he announced that spokesman Charles Bakaly had abruptly resigned in connec-

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tion with an investigation into another alleged leak to the *New York Times*. This time it was the front-page story on January 31 that said Starr's team had concluded it might be possible to indict a sitting president. At least on the surface, Starr's action seemed odd; the article contained no secret grand-jury material and concerned a somewhat hypothetical in-house legal analysis. But Starr lowered the boom anyway and referred the matter to the Justice Department.

So there's still a lot going on. And there could conceivably be more, because there is always at least an outside chance of new prosecutions, and any of the already-scheduled trials could be delayed by new litigation. On top of that, Starr is required to write a final report, which will be submitted to the panel of judges who selected him. Once they approve, it will be made public.

Don't look for it anytime soon. Lawrence Walsh, the Iran-contra independent counsel, was appointed in December 1986; his final report was made public in January 1994. At that pace, Starr's report should be at a bookstore near you sometime in early 2001. **NR**

■ ABROAD ■

China Lobbies

Beijing's campaign against missile defenses.

PETER W. RODMAN

As Washington reaches a state of high excitement over Chinese military espionage, another issue looms over U.S.–China relations, perhaps even more important to our foreign policy: Beijing is escalating its diplomatic campaign against a U.S. decision to provide theater missile defenses to allies and friends in the region.

Today, offensive ballistic missiles offer a kind of poor man's power projection. China, which still lacks air dominance and a serious amphibious capability, has discovered in ballistic missiles a quick way to gain strategic leverage. The growing Chinese arsenal, plus the more acute danger from North Korea, has led several U.S. allies and friends, quite naturally, to seek theater missile defenses from us. Washington is talking with Tokyo, Seoul, and (more timidly) Taipei about providing some counter to the challenge they face.

The Chinese hate this. In their full-court press to head it off, they have resurrected arguments that go back to the depths of the Cold War. We hear once again, for example, that the attempt to defend against missiles is itself destabilizing, because it will provoke an offensive-arms race or in some other way make conflict more likely. This argument was never completely plausible in the U.S.–Soviet context, and it has certainly not improved with age. It has always seemed more plausible that defenses would make an attack *less* likely, not more. And in both the Nixon and Reagan administrations, our strategic-defense programs proved diplomatically useful in *limiting* offensive arsenals.

This did not deter Ambassador Sha Zukang, however, China's top arms-control and disarmament official. He

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told a Washington audience in January that any U.S. missile-defense employment, whether here or in Asia, "will have negative impacts on the regional and even global strategic stability." Other countries will be "forced," he said, to develop more advanced offensive missiles or to proliferate missile technologies. Western academics sympathetic to this view warn that China will be prompted to deploy MIRVs on its intercontinental missiles. In February, the *Financial Times* quoted a threat from senior Chinese officials to accelerate China's transfer of ballistic-

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China sees the U.S. network of alliances and commitments in the region as inconvenient.

■

missile technology to (unnamed) other countries in retaliation. Beijing has even warned (via the *Washington Post*) that a provision of defenses to Taiwan would be a casus belli.

We should take this with a grain of salt. China is already expanding its offensive-missile arsenal—reportedly tripling the missiles deployed against Taiwan, for instance—and accelerating its MIRV development. All of this will happen no matter what the United States does about defenses. Nor has China made any offer to refrain from its offensive buildup if the U.S. refrains from defenses. As for becoming an even more ardent proliferator of offensive-missile technology, China would hardly enhance its image as a responsible international partner if it did so—not to mention that its bargaining position in this regard already suffers from its less than complete compliance with earlier assurances given the Clinton administration.

What is really at stake here is not hardware but geopolitics. China sees the U.S. network of alliances and commitments in the region as inconvenient. What it accepted and even welcomed in the Soviet era it now sees as incompatible with its own vision of the region's future. This is an important shift in Chinese policy. A government white paper on "China's National Defense" published last July criticized U.S. military alliances as symptoms of "hegemonic" ambition and a "Cold War mentality," a danger to stability.

The United States cannot yield to these pressures without paying a huge price. China's growing offensive-missile capability is a major change in the region's balance of power, necessitating an American response. If the technology exists to defend against these missiles and the U.S. flinches from providing it to allies and friends on the front line, it will be a severe blow to the confidence of those who have relied on us for 50 years. Our alliance relations might not survive it. And if we were to flinch because of Chinese pressure, the geopolitical implications would be even more profound.

Taiwan is a particularly sensitive case, warranting prudence in how we go about our longstanding policy of helping the island protect itself against the use of force by Beijing. Currently, Taiwan is allowed to purchase an upgraded Patriot system, but no more. This constraint is artificial. A range of options is available, from sea-based systems (which could remain in U.S. hands but be deployed near Taiwan in a crisis) to outright transfer of an advanced system. Under equally longstanding policy, we are not in the business of promoting Taiwan's independence. But under the Taiwan Relations Act, we have reserved the right to provide "arms of a defensive character." And what could be more defensive than missile defenses?

Japan and South Korea, of course, are treaty allies, and 80,000 U.S. troops are stationed in the area. These are no-brainers. The missile threat from North Korea is already clear and present. Here we have no option but to call the Chinese bluff (and it could be that Beijing's most recent obsessing about defenses for Taiwan is a sign that it is punting on its opposition to defenses elsewhere).

The Chinese would do well to think hard about how far they want to press their propaganda campaign. A consensus is rapidly forming in the United States—in the administration, the military, and even in academia—that theater missile defenses in Asia are essential. In the region itself, some are thinking that if they cannot acquire defenses, they will need *offensive* missiles of their own. Could China possibly want this?

Meanwhile, Beijing's diplomatic effort is reminiscent of the Soviet bluster against NATO's Euro-missile deployment in 1983; it should be resisted just as firmly. Whether concerning Taiwan or some other U.S. friend, China's arguments suggest a chutzpah of Dershowitzian proportions. Beijing seems to be saying: How dare you take steps to defend yourselves against the weapons with which we now choose to intimidate you! This is not a position that China should seriously expect the United States to accept. **NR**

Mr. Rodman, an NR senior editor, is director of national-security programs at the Nixon Center.

■ **CAMPAIGN 2000** ■

Princess Di-Fi

A senator's prospects.

JOHN J. MILLER

SEN. DIANNE FEINSTEIN goes way back with Chinese president Jiang Zemin. They first met in 1985 as the mayors of San Francisco and Shanghai, which are sister cities. They have since visited each other repeatedly, once even hitting the dance floor together.

Today Feinstein is one of China's leading allies in Washington. When the issue is trade, Feinstein will push hard for no limits. When it's human rights, she will equivocate to the point of comparing China's massacre of hundreds in Tiananmen Square to the four shooting deaths at Kent State, as she did in 1997. "More people vote in China today than do in the United States," she said later that year, referring to 300 million Chinese who had cast ballots in village elections.

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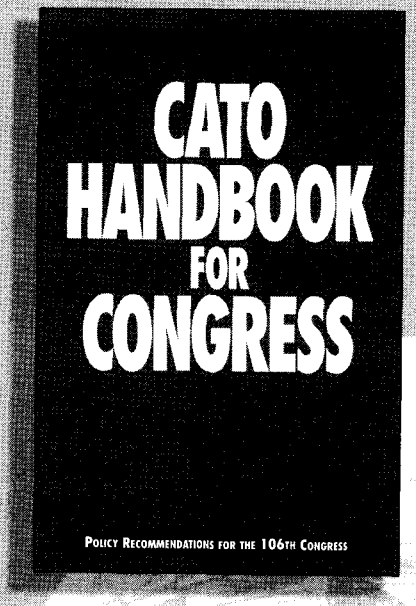

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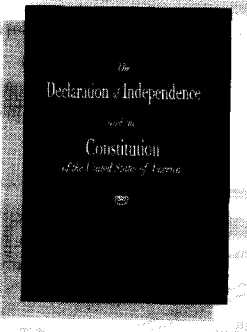

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The Chinese know they have a friend in her. Three years ago, Feinstein dined with Jiang in what had been Mao's private residence, and later she received a special tour. "We were told that we were the first foreigners to see his bedroom and the swimming pool," Feinstein gushed to the *Los Angeles Times*. "It was a very historic moment to see some of these things." Feinstein has not risen quite as far in her country's political system as Jiang has in his, but the senior senator from California has come a long way from City Hall. The next time they get together, however, Feinstein probably will wonder whether Jiang's friendship is blocking the biggest step of her career.

■

It's possible that the only politician more damaged than Gore by the latest spy revelations is Feinstein.

■

With Vice President Al Gore looking like a lock for the nomination, speculation already has turned to his running mate. Over the next year, Feinstein will be on Gore's mind. When it appeared last fall that the Lewinsky scandal might force Bill Clinton from office, many Democrats believed that a President Gore would choose Feinstein as his vice president, as she, like Sen. Joseph Lieberman of Connecticut, had distanced herself from the White House. Interest in her never died down. She is mentioned as a Gore ticketmate more often than any other contender. *Washingtonian* magazine gave 4-to-1 odds that Gore would pick her, and no other potential vice-presidential nominee came close.

Several factors weigh strongly in Feinstein's favor. Her home state holds almost a fifth of the electoral votes needed for victory, and Republicans appear eager to compete for them in 2000. Some polls suggest that Gore doesn't run as well among female voters as Clinton. And he may be in even deeper trouble if Elizabeth Dole winds up on the GOP ticket. Gore may ultimately believe he has no choice but to select a woman. And who besides Feinstein is he going to pick—Gov. Jeanne Shaheen of New Hampshire?

The 65-year-old Feinstein is viewed as a moderate who won't alarm suburbanites. Despite an overall liberal voting record—she has never met an abortion restriction she liked and was one of only 14 senators to oppose the Defense of Marriage Act—Feinstein has a reputation for pragmatism. She was once booed by California Democrats at their state convention for supporting the death penalty. She then shrewdly turned this Sister Souljah-like experience into an effective campaign commercial. In 1995, she met secretly with activist Glynn Custred to discuss the possibility of endorsing the anti-racial-preferences initiative that would become Proposition 209 (she came out against it a year later). In 1998, she served as the honorary co-chairman of the retention campaign for the chief justice of the California Supreme Court, Ron George, a Republican.

Compared with California's other senator, Barbara Boxer, Feinstein certainly looks like a centrist. She has even flirted with tax cuts at a time when most Democrats feel safe opposing them. On March 2, she announced with Republican senator Charles Grassley a plan to reduce taxes by $200 billion over 10 years. Says Sacramento-based GOP consultant Tony Quinn: "If she had been born in Orange County, she'd have the same views and be a moderate Republican."

Walter Mondale interviewed Feinstein to be his running mate in 1984. He eventually picked Rep. Geraldine Ferraro, though, making history by selecting the first female vice-presidential nominee but also creating a headache for himself because of her husband's controversial business deals. If Gore selects Feinstein, he can expect similar problems.

Dianne Feinstein by Roman Genn

Feinstein is one of the wealthiest members of Congress, thanks to her husband, the San Francisco-based merchant banker Richard C. Blum. Last year, their financial-disclosure form ran 82 pages. Blum invests more than $1 billion for himself and others, and has interests in companies ranging from Northwest Airlines to Oshkosh B'Gosh. During the 1980s—shortly after Feinstein arranged sister-city ties with Shanghai—Blum started making substantial investments in China.

Although there are no signs of impropriety on Feinstein's part, it's hard to believe Blum's repeated claim that he has not traded on his wife's political influence. When Feinstein travels to China, Blum often accompanies her at his own expense. He then sits in on meetings with Jiang and others. The Chinese have a word for this: *guanxi*. Loosely translated, it means social relations. Business success in China requires plenty of it, and Blum has it to burn, courtesy of his wife.

In 1986, Feinstein and Jiang teamed up to create corporations that would encourage business between San Francisco and Shanghai. Blum became a director of one of these groups, Shanghai Pacific Partners. Feinstein even promoted the company in a 1987 article for the *San Francisco Business Times*. The Shanghai government then launched a joint venture with Blum to construct a $30 million, 28-story apartment building. Blum says he lost money on the deal, but the experience hardly turned him off to sending good money after bad—more than $100 million in various Chinese investments since his wife became a senator, in fact.

A series of press inquiries two years ago into Blum's overseas investments started singeing Feinstein as she contemplated run-

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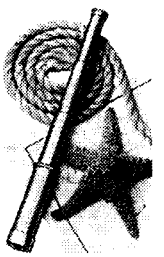

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ning for governor. Blum then announced that he would give all his personal profits from Chinese investments to the American Himalaya Foundation, a non-profit group that helps Tibetan refugees. "This doesn't pass the smell test," says one GOP congressman. "If he really cared about Tibet, he wouldn't associate himself with Communist oppressors."

Blum has caused trouble for his wife before. In 1990, he loaned $3 million to her unsuccessful gubernatorial campaign. The campaign reported it improperly, which brought a $190,000 state fine. California governor Gray Davis, who battled Feinstein for the Democratic Senate nomination in 1992, compared her to tax cheater Leona Helmsley. As a senator, Feinstein has approved appropriations bills sending hundreds of millions of dollars to companies with heavy Blum investments, including defense contractors and a job-training company. Larry McCarthy, a media consultant who worked on Michael Huffington's 1994 challenge to Feinstein, argues these apparent conflicts of interest were a major Feinstein vulnerability (meanwhile, Huffington had spouse trouble of his own—Arianna's nanny problem).

Gore might have still other reasons to skip Feinstein. Could a Jewish woman from San Francisco—especially one who once participated in a lesbian "solemnization" ceremony—win votes in Alabama? There is even some evidence she won't run well in California. Lawyers for California secretary of state Bill Jones, a Republican, say that Feinstein can run both for senator and for vice president in 2000, but this electoral two-timing probably won't help. Her statewide races have not been cakewalks, and one private GOP poll from earlier this year shows that a dual candidacy hurts her dearly.

The biggest problem, of course, is the Chinese connection. Gore is already saddled with controversy over Chinese campaign contributions. And it's possible that the only politician more damaged than Gore by the latest spy revelations is Feinstein. By next summer, she could be radioactive.

So perhaps Fritz Mondale knew what he was doing after all. NR

■ THE HILL ■

House Warming

The congressional GOP smiles.

KATE O'BEIRNE

LEADING a congressional caucus is typically compared to herding cats, and Speaker Denny Hastert has Republicans purring contentedly. It's not just the initial goodwill a new Speaker enjoys. Republicans are crediting the Illinois congressman for recent victories on education reform, missile defense, and a budget resolution that enjoys the broad support of the GOP conference. "This month, we're quietly winning," declares Rep. Joe Scarborough of Florida. "And I haven't said that since September of 1995."

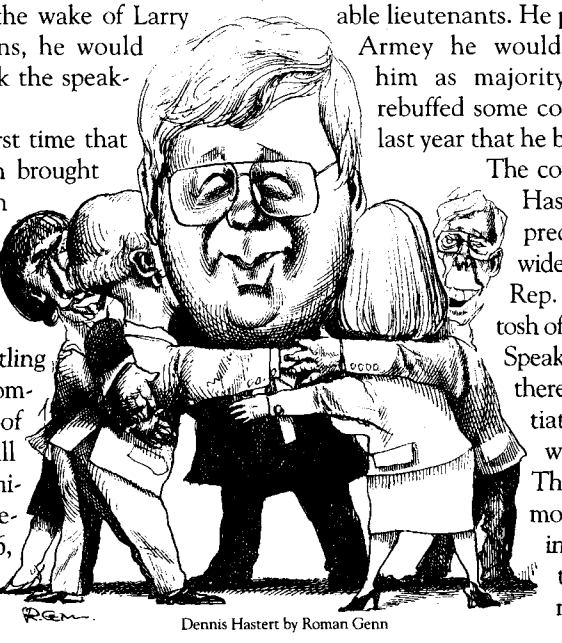
Outside GOP circles, the response to Hastert's emergence as Speaker-apparent was, "Denny who?" But Scarborough says that he was one of many Republicans who turned to Hastert "within three minutes" of Rep. Bob Livingston's announcement last December that, in the wake of Larry Flynt's revelations, he would not, after all, seek the speakership.

It wasn't the first time that Hastert had been brought off the bench. In 1981, party leaders drafted Hastert—then a high-school teacher and wrestling coach in a rural community west of Chicago—to fill the seat of a terminally ill state representative. In 1986, he was asked to enter the congressional race in the heavily Republican fourteenth district when another fatal illness forced the GOP candidate to step aside.

And now Hastert, a man without much of an ego or agenda, has risen to the top of an institution where almost everyone has both. During his 12 years in the House, he has developed a reputation for hard work behind the scenes, an ability to forge compromise, integrity, and geniality. Henry Hyde describes his Illinois colleague as "a totally nice guy, without an enemy in the world." But that doesn't mean he's a moderate: Hastert earns perfect scores in conservative ratings and zeroes from liberal groups like the ACLU.

Nor does it mean he's avoided tough issues. He ran GOP task forces on health care in 1994, Medicare reform in 1995, and HMO reform in 1998. He also ran the subcommittee with jurisdiction over census sampling, a sharply partisan issue. He hasn't temporized during intra-Republican power struggles, either. He joined Tom DeLay in backing Newt Gingrich's opponent for GOP whip in 1989 and ran DeLay's own race for the number-three post in 1994 against Gingrich's candidate.

But Hastert didn't start any power struggles. He avoided all the intrigue and jockeying for position that marked the GOP leadership during Gingrich's tenure. He served as DeLay's chief deputy, sharing staff and offices in the well-regarded whip operation, while remaining one of Gingrich's most reliable lieutenants. He promised Dick Armey he wouldn't challenge him as majority leader, and rebuffed some colleagues' pleas last year that he break his word.



Dennis Hastert by Roman Genn

The contrast between Hastert and his predecessor is widely noted. Says Rep. David McIntosh of Indiana, "This Speaker decides that there are three initiatives and we work on them. There aren't three more the following week." Another member recalls that

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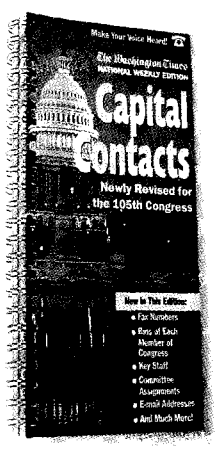

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when Gingrich returned from a meeting at the White House, he would brag that he had outwitted the president. Hastert, however, explained what had transpired "like a reporter."

Says Hastert himself, "You know, this job is not a lot different from coaching or teaching or being in a small business. It's a people business. It's getting along, listening to what people have to say, trying to build consensus, trying to move people forward, trying to bring the best out in people and giving them a chance to shine."

Partly because they sought him out for a job he hadn't sought for himself, Republicans are determined that Hastert be a successful Speaker. But while the GOP is trying to make its second marriage work, Democrats are clearly intent on breaking up the happy House. Hastert knows that collegiality and cooperation will only go so far. While both the education bill and the missile-defense resolution enjoyed bipartisan sponsorship, he says, "Everything is not bipartisan here. You have to stick by principle. There are some things we're going to do that probably the president won't sign, but that can't spook us from doing it." The Democrats, he says, are trying to "make us a do-nothing Congress, when actually what they're doing is making themselves do-nothing Democrats."

Already, Hastert has stood up to the administration. Secretary of state Madeleine Albright pressured him to call off a vote on sending troops to monitor a peace accord in Kosovo, telling him that he would have blood on his hands if he caused negotiations to fail. He held the vote anyway: "I thought that Congress had to have an open and honest debate, before it was too late to debate it." In the end, the House narrowly supported the president, as did Hastert himself. But Hastert was willing to take the risk of being blamed for Clinton's foreign-policy failure if the House had voted the other way.

It is largely because of Hastert's personal qualities that conservatives are expressing uncharacteristic optimism. "At the end of the day, I think conservatives will get more than we did with Newt with a bigger majority," predicts McIntosh. Henry Hyde also believes that the Speaker is "ideally suited" to the perilous politics of the months ahead. "Providence works in strange ways," he says. Maybe even through Larry Flynt. **NR**

■ SCIENCE ■

Unnatural Selection

The feminists' unconvincing biology.

JOHN O. McGINNIS

A SPECTER is haunting feminism—the specter of Darwinism. Biological learning has undermined the feminist mantra that disproportionate male representation in the highest-ranking positions of corporate and political life is evidence of patriarchy, or even of discrimination. Instead, biological theory and research suggest that patterns of representation are a natural outgrowth of the fact that men, on average, are more aggressive than women, more concerned with status, and more inclined to take risks, while women, again on average, are more nurturing and empathetic.

The feminists' first response to the rise of this inconvenient biology was to deny its relevance. Yet this is no longer possible, when even popular magazines routinely discuss the biological basis of human behavior, as in the notorious *Time* headline, "Infidelity: It May Be in Our Genes." This spring will see the publication of no fewer than three books that try a different tack—offering biological evidence of female traits that are more to the liking of feminists. *New York Times* science reporter Natalie Angier has already outlined part of her book in that paper's Sunday magazine, and Barbara Ehrenreich has offered a preview of them all in another *Time* story, breathlessly titled "The Real Truth About the Female."

Feminist biology is mostly wishful thinking. As Kingsley Browne of Wayne State University points out in his excellent new work, *Divided Labours*, women, like females of other species, are more invested in children because eggs are a scarcer resource than sperm and the female contribution to the creation of a child is far more time consuming. On this theory, one would predict that women would be more selective than men in their partners, as they have more to lose in the event of a wrong choice. They would also be more supportive of their offspring.

Men and other male animals, by contrast, have no such limits on their reproductive opportunities. One would therefore predict that they would be more aggressive and undertake more risks to acquire mates and resources; they, after all, can more easily translate these mating opportunities and resources into limitless progeny. Consistent with these predictions, polygyny (an arrangement wherein one man lives with many women) has been common throughout history, whereas polyandry (one woman, many men) has been extremely rare.

Because of their different reproductive strategies, men and women have evolved different hormonal processes that generate different dispositions. Testosterone and other hormones that trigger the development of male physical characteristics also organize personality traits. We know this in part because these traits appear in an unusual degree among girls who, because of a genetic defect, are exposed in utero to these hormones. Psychological studies also suggest that men and women have different predispositions from the beginning. Even before children understand that trucks are associated with boys and dolls associated with girls, girls tend to like dolls and other toys that lend themselves to nurturing and empathy, while boys reach for the Tonka Trucks.

Against the combined weight of this evidence (and this is a mere sample of what Browne and others have collected) the new feminists have embarrassingly little to offer. As evidence of female aggressiveness, Ehrenreich cites studies that claim primitive women gathered as much as 70 percent of their tribes' plant food. But evolutionary biologists have never said that women were not important contributors to the food supply.

Mr. McGinnis is a professor at the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law in New York City.

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Indeed, if our female ancestors concentrated on gathering plant food while men engaged in the more dangerous enterprise of hunting, it suggests precisely that men and women evolved temperamental differences. Ehrenreich also speculates that the aid of post-menopausal grandmothers may have made it unnecessary for primitive women to bond in pairs with men, hence debunking the idea of female dependence. But the notion that in an era of early death and debilitating disease elderly women could have performed defense and other necessary tasks better than young men seems laughable.

Natalie Angier, in turn, tries to poke holes in traditional evolutionary biology by focusing more on mating than on work. She observes that female primates often choose to couple with members outside their troops—supposedly evidence of female promiscuity. But evolu-

■

Feminist biology fails not only as science: It doesn't support much of feminism's current political agenda.

■

tionary biology never predicted that women would lack a strategic mating sense. Indeed, being extremely careful about choosing a mate might sometimes require searching widely for Mr. Right. Angier is correct that a sexually adventurous strategy may make sense for some women in some circumstances, but this does not show that *on average* they will act as promiscuously as men. The new feminist biology misses the mark again and again because it fails to appreciate that evolutionary biology suggests only *median* differences between the sexes in temperament and preferences.

Angier seems particularly affronted by the claim that men prefer young, attractive women while women prefer older men with plentiful resources; the idea is that youth assures men of women's fertility, and resources assure women of men's investment in their children's future. Studies from widely dispersed nations at different levels of development all contain this same finding. In response, feminists argue that this is true only because women under patriarchy

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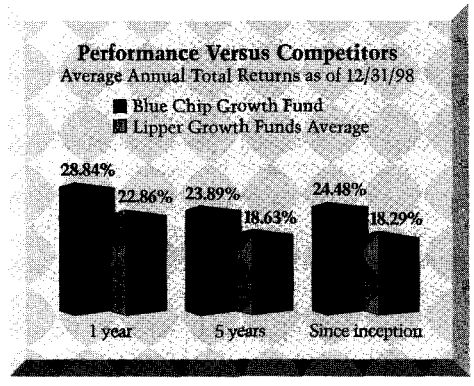

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Can Israel survive without it?

There is incessant agitation for Israel to turn over most or perhaps even all of Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") to the PLO. Such a move would inevitably lead to the creation of a Palestinian State—perhaps even with Jerusalem as its capital. Can Israel survive this dismemberment? Is it in the best interests of the United States?

What are the facts?

The Root of the conflict. The conflict between Israel and the Arabs is not about borders and not about the Palestinians. It is about Israel's very existence. The PLO still adheres to its infamous "phased plan." It calls for first creating a Palestinian state on any territory vacated by Israel and then using that state to foment a final allied Arab assault against the truncated Jewish state.

The Importance of territory. Many believe that in this age of missiles, territory is of little importance. But this is not the case. The Arab states have acquired over $50 billion of the most advanced armaments since the end of the Gulf War. And those are not just "conventional" weapons—enormous quantities of tanks, aircraft and much more. The Arab state possess large arsenals of chemical and biological weapons, and all of them work feverishly on the development of their nuclear potential. All of those weapons have only one single target and one single purpose: the destruction of the state of Israel. And that goal is not being cancelled for any agreements between Israel and the Palestinians.

For both "conventional" war and for war of mass destruction, territory and topography are critical for self-defense and deterrence. The mountainous territory of Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") is an indispensable line of defense. It totally controls access to Israel's heartland from the east. Israel needs this high ground for defense and to be able to peer deeply into enemy territory. The high ground allows Israel to detect missiles while they are still in the launch stage and to destroy them.

Would the "West Bank" be demilitarized? Even those who want Israel to retreat to her pre-1967 borders are agreed that the evacuated areas must be demilitarized. But that would be useless. Because the Palestinians will have thousands of trained soldiers, camouflaged as their police force. In case of war against Israel, these troops could be helicoptered in minutes to their positions, with armored forces reaching them within the same night. In any case, it is highly doubtful that the surrounding hostile Arab nations would allow such a military vacuum to exist. And finally, there is the matter of terrorism. There are over fifteen Palestinian terror organizations that neither Yassir Arafat nor any other Palestinian authority can control. There would be a constant rain of Katyusha rockets launched into the Tel Aviv area and into the entire coastal plain, which contains 80% of Israel's population and of its industrial and military potential. Ben Gurion airport, every incoming and outgoing flight, would be subject to mortar fire or shoulder-held Stinger attack. Does anybody doubt that the Arabs would not exploit that irresistible opportunity?

> "Without Judea/Samaria (the 'West Bank') Israel would be totally indefensible; therefore, neither the purposes of Israel nor those of the United States are served by Israel's relinquishing control of the 'West Bank'."

Without the "West Bank" Israel would be totally indefensible. That is the professional opinion of *over 100 U.S. generals and admirals. Israel's strong defensive posture makes it most inadvisable* for Israel's enemies to attack her. But once this defensive strength is removed, a coordinated war against Israel can only be a matter of time. The example and fate of Czechoslovakia, which preparatory to the Second World War was dismantled and shorn of its defensive capacity, insistently come to mind. What does all this mean to the United States? In a part of the world in which our country has the most far-reaching geopolitical stakes, Israel is the guarantor of American interests in the area. With Israel in a position of weakness, the role of the United States in the area would collapse and radical states such as Syria, Iraq and Iran would dominate. That is why, despite the heady prospect of "peace in our time," neither the purposes of Israel nor those of the United States would be served by Israel's relinquishing control over the "West Bank."

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depend on men for resources. The studies, however, show that rich and accomplished women want even richer and more accomplished men. Angier counters that high-earning women need male riches only because their own riches are insecure. But while she notes that women on average earn less than men (a point consistent with biological differences in priorities and temperament), she provides no evidence whatsoever that the income or riches of women are indeed less secure.

Feminist biology fails not only as science: It doesn't support much of feminism's current political agenda. Both Angier and Ehrenreich argue that their findings show that women are flexible and have a variety of interests. But it is the liberty at the heart of modern conservatism that sustains the social niches that accommodate this variety. In a free society, each woman is able to choose a profession that is suited to her particular talents and temperament. The market encourages companies to hire the most productive worker, regardless of gender. Similarly, in a society with limited government, women who want to spend more time with their children can do so and those who do not can marry or hire others who will take care of them.

Of course, these choices necessarily involve trade-offs in time and money, but that is a consequence not of patriarchy but of mortality and scarcity. Yet many feminists favor quotas and a comparable-worth pay system, initiatives to allow the government rather than the market to determine the value of performance. They also lobby for government funding of child care, in effect a tax on women (and men) who want to care for their children themselves. Thus their program is one that tends to foster uniformity rather than variety.

Which brings us right back to evolutionary biology. Biologists now recognize that one of the strongest primate tendencies is the drive to form coalitions that can seize the social surplus for their own benefit. The feminist political program shows that women of similar preferences can organize for those ends as effectively as any other interest group. It is a kind of equality, to be sure, but not one worth celebrating—and certainly not the one feminist biologists had in mind. **NR**

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■ COVER STORY ■

Black and Blue

New York erupts over a race-tinged killing—again.

JOHN O'SULLIVAN

WHENEVER a crime with racial overtones hits the newspapers, a highly predictable scenario is acted out. If the crime is, say, a mugging of a white person by a black person, the news media take immediate pains to establish that the crime had nothing to do with race. It was simply an isolated act of thuggishness. The law must take its course—but no more need be said about the matter. If, on the other hand, a black man is attacked by a white person or gang of whites, then it becomes the occasion for wider social theorizing about the persistence of racial attitudes in American society. Perhaps it was an attempted lynching; very likely, it was a hate crime; almost certainly it indicates racism in the community. And if the crime is one of police brutality against someone belonging to an ethnic minority, then it is held to demonstrate widespread ill-treatment of minorities by the police, the entrenched racism of social institutions in general, and the need for their reform along "affirmative action" lines.

If this account seems exaggerated, consider the media's treatment of two New York crimes that occurred within four months of each other in 1989: the murder of Yusuf Hawkins, a black youth, by a white member of a street gang in Bensonhurst and the rape and near-fatal beating of a white investment banker by a gang of black and Hispanic youths in Central Park. "Black Youth Is Killed in Brooklyn by Whites in Attack Called Racial," is how the *New York Times* headlined the Yusuf Hawkins murder. Only a few months before it had given the Central Park rape a more racially dispassionate introduction: "Youths Rape and Beat Central Park Jogger."

No one suggested that the people of Schomburg Plaza, where the jogger's attackers lived, bore any responsibility for the assault on her. Indeed, the New York *Daily News* solemnly warned against any such lapse into racial stereotyping: "the simple truth [is] that dreadful things are done by individual thugs to individual victims—not by or to a race." But the Hawkins murder produced exactly the opposite reflection: that it was the inevitable result of the racial hostility allegedly felt by the Italian-American inhabitants of Bensonhurst towards blacks. A *Daily News* editorial duly intoned: "despite the protests of some Bensonhurst residents, the attack was based on race . . . wrong to dismiss it as a bunch of neighbor rowdies going too far . . . The motivation was deeper, more insidious." Connoisseurs of double standards will especially enjoy the titles of the two *News* editorials. They were, respectively, "Stay Calm, New York" and "Dare To Attack Racist Violence."

This discrepancy in journalistic treatment might be understandable if most crimes in which the victims and perpetrators are of different races were committed by whites against blacks, or other minorities. But, as statistics amply demonstrate, this is not the case. In light of the sad reality, it is not racism but prudence that prompts a white person to cross the street at the approach of black youths. Merely consider the trade-off. If the white's fears are misplaced and the youths are decent, respectable persons, they will at worst suffer feelings of rejection and humiliation at being mistaken for criminals. If his fears are correct, however, then he has saved himself from something terrible. These considerations weigh very differently in the scales of justice: It is perfectly reasonable to risk hurting others' feelings in order to avoid being murdered. And when that trade-off is multiplied thousands of times, it is more than reasonable for a city police force to risk hurting the feelings of those who fit a criminal "profile" by frisking them for guns in order to save hundreds of people from being murdered.

SPLIT-SECOND DECISION

Which brings us to the case of Amadou Diallo in New York. On February 4, four New York cops searching for a serial rapist in the Bronx followed Diallo into the foyer of his tenement building and shot him 19 times, firing 41 bullets in a matter of five seconds. Diallo was unarmed, and the cops have since been charged with second-degree murder. The most common explanation, drawn from a lawyer for the four and other policemen, is that Diallo fit the profile of the rapist and the cops thought he was going for a gun. In a split-second decision, they shot him to save themselves. But since the cops have not yet given their account of the incident and there were no eye-witnesses, no one else really knows what happened.

That has not prevented New York's media mavens like the *Times* columnist Bob Herbert, on-the-make liberal politicians like Mark Green, failed mayors like David Dinkins, racial hucksters like "the Rev." Al Sharpton, and almost-famous people like Susan Sarandon from deciding not only that the cops are guilty of a serious crime but that such an outrage is the inevitable result of the policing tactics adopted under Mayor Rudolph Giuliani. In a left-wing version of debutantes being presented at court, various celebrities turn up outside City Hall to be arrested, appear briefly in court, and then

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head off to receive congratulations on their extremely civil disobedience over Park Avenue cocktails. Media coverage since the shooting (the *New York Post* excepted) has generally hewed to the line "Dare To Attack Racist Policing" rather than "Stay Calm, New York." We are continually reminded, for instance, that "four white cops" killed Diallo by newspapers that generally criticize references to the race of criminal suspects; so is journalistic etiquette thrown out the window.

Unusually for such ideologically charged cases, however, there seems to be broad agreement on the facts. All agree that under Giuliani the New York Police Department has conducted a remarkably successful war against crime—though people differ about the alleged costs of that success. How did this astounding improvement take place? Not because the NYPD has been shooting more people, as the agitprop campaign over Diallo might suggest. The rate of police shootings in New York is low and declining. In the last three years, it has fallen from 344 shootings to 249. Fatal police shootings have declined still more dramatically, from 30 to 19 over the same period—the second-lowest figure since 1973, when records began to be kept. Indeed, such shootings in New York are now more rare than in other major cities. Diallo's murder was not an indication of how the NYPD operates, as the protesters allege; if anything, it runs counter to the trend of policing under Giuliani.

Crime has declined because the NYPD has waged an aggressive campaign to stop it before it happens, in particular by conducting searches for illegal handguns in high-crime areas. The Street Crimes Unit—to which the four policemen who shot Diallo belong—is one important element in this campaign. Although it constitutes only about 1 percent of the NYPD, it accounts for 40 percent of all gun arrests. It has accomplished this by conducting street frisks of those whom cops have a "reasonable suspicion" are armed and dangerous. But its critics charge that this has led to the frisking of too many people. A *New York Times* report, for instance, gave the numbers frisked in 1997–98 as 45,084, of whom only 9,546 were arrested for gun possession—which led the *Times* reporter to complain that "nearly 40,000 people were stopped and frisked . . . because a street crimes officer mistakenly thought they were carrying guns."

What that means, of course, is that about one in five of those stopped was in fact carrying an illegal gun. One wonders what percentage the *Times* would consider reasonable—30 percent? 50? 75?—before it blessed such searches. And since 20 percent is apparently too low, how does it justify allowing 9,546 armed criminals to wander round New York to mug, murder, and rape merely to avoid embarrassing about 17,500 people annually?

The answer is, of course, that, like mainstream media opinion in general, the *Times* would raise no serious objection if those frisked and arrested were an ethnic cross-section of society. What raises its hackles is that they are mainly black or Hispanic, which in turn raises its suspicions that they are the victims of police "racial profiling." This the NYPD strongly denies—taking someone's race into account when conducting a search is illegal to begin with. Its own explanation is that, if you are conducting searches mainly in high-crime areas, then you will inevitably end up frisking mainly black and Hispanic suspects. As a former commander of the Street Crimes Unit said, "In the precincts that we worked in, it would be difficult to find a white guy." But does anyone seriously suggest that the police should concentrate on low-crime areas?

LIBERAL RACISM

In the end, the objection to the NYPD's successful anti-crime policy amounts to a desire to ignore racial disparities in crime and to escape their implications. Liberals in particular are unhappy fighting crime if they seem to be fighting mainly black crime. Their favorite offenses are "hate" and white-collar crimes where, they hope, more of the "perps" will turn out to be white. And they shrink from police tactics that, though they may greatly benefit the black majority by increasing their safety, may undermine liberal myths of pervasive white racism and black victimhood. It is this liberal racism that forms the emotional backdrop to the Diallo case in New York.

Admittedly, there are local enemies who would like to check Giuliani's career and who are not above falsely attributing his success to racial discrimination in law enforcement. An earlier victim of police brutality, Abner Louima, was persuaded by one of his "advisors," probably either "the Rev." Al or one of his accomplices, to make the false allegation that a cop had shouted out, "It's Giuliani time!" in the course of beating and sodomizing him. Nor do the mayor's enemies stop at the city line. Democrats and the Clinton administration have recently launched no fewer than three inquiries into police tactics in New York, and President Clinton devoted a recent radio talk to police brutality. These were almost certainly precautionary steps in a possible Senate campaign by Mrs. Clinton.

But the glue that holds all liberal critics together is the conviction that white America is fundamentally racist and has to be continually restrained from its punitive racist impulses. Hence the trends in media coverage and political rhetoric noted above: White-on-black crimes must be highlighted to shame white America out of its racism; black-on-white crimes must be downplayed lest they encourage white America in its racism; and any broader social indicators—whether crime statistics or police tactics—must be judged by the test of whether they serve to encourage or restrain white racism.

As with almost all liberal policies, of course, the unintended consequences are likely to prove more important than those intended. Hastily recruited minority cops will be more likely to act, and shoot, as hastily (the Detroit and Washington forces, which have higher numbers of minorities, also have much worse records of police brutality); uniformed cops will be unable to surprise criminals; and monitoring "racial" friskings will waste police time and discourage the frisking of manifestly dangerous suspects when the relevant quota has been filled. Even while these reforms are still in the discussion stage, the number of street-crime arrests in New York has fallen by 60 percent since the Diallo killing, and the murder rate has ticked up slightly. Once they are implemented, crime will resume its increase, including black crime; white racism will then have more to feed on; and—oh yes—the number of black victims will rise disproportionately too. But what will that matter to comfortable middle-class liberals as long as "the work goes on, the cause endures, the hope still lives, and the dream shall never die"? **NR**

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Protest Too Much

At Al Sharpton's anti-cop show.

RICHARD LOWRY

OUTSIDE New York Police Department headquarters in Manhattan, as angry chants over a bullhorn fill the air and hundreds of demonstrators wave placards denouncing "killer cops," a woman is politely asking an officer how she can get arrested. The cop, part of a phalanx of police at least notionally guarding the building, drops his bored straight-ahead look long enough to reply, "You have to see the Rev. Sharpton. He's back there. He has a list."

The hottest protest in America—the demonstration against the police shooting of Amadou Diallo in the Bronx—is as exclusive as the scene outside any downtown nightclub, except there are blue sawhorse police barriers instead of velvet ropelines and the maestro isn't a stylish hipster but the doughy Al Sharpton. Occasionally an Irish cop can be seen at his side, just making sure everything is going as planned. No police dogs or firehoses here. Only a daily, well-choreographed charade: You pretend to commit an act of civil disobedience in the service of high principle, we pretend to arrest you.

Wednesday, March 24, was Rabbi Day. To prove the broad-based nature of his demonstration, Sharpton was allowing Jews to get arrested. "This is not a publicity stunt," Sharpton assured a crush of reporters and cameramen, all pushing and craning so as not to miss any of the day's stunt. Amid all the kente cloth and African-inspired black, red, and green flags, the prospective arrestees stand out in their white yarmulkes and T-shirts proclaiming "Jews for Racial and Economic Justice." This is David Dinkins's "gorgeous mosaic," pale division.

A dreadlocked crowd monitor yells instructions "for those who are getting arrested," and soon enough the Jewish contingent is being escorted through the police in groups of 15 to 20, a bunch of white-haired ladies getting through last. (When a straggler is cut off and blocked from the arrest area, Sharpton tries to explain to the officers: "She's with the Jews.") "I never thought this day would come!" enthuses one protester, marveling at Jews in league with Sharpton. Which *is* amazing, considering that a Sharpton-supported picket inspired an arson that killed a Jewish merchant in Harlem a few years ago, and Sharpton happily lends aid and comfort to the anti-Semite Khalid Muhammad.

Once through the police, the lucky protesters block the main entrance to the headquarters. They chant, or talk among themselves, or even make cell-phone calls, and at one point break into a halfhearted rendition of the obligatory "We Shall Overcome," dampened no doubt by uncertainty about what exactly is being overcome. After about ten minutes, the demonstrators have to move again through police barriers to another entrance that they also must block to qualify for charges of disorderly conduct.

Why this should be so isn't entirely clear. In fact, one cop, asked what crime the protesters are technically being arrested for, shrugs and shakes his head: He doesn't know. The walk to the second entrance means arrest is near, so celebration ensues. The prospective arrestees pump their fists, give thumbs-up signs, or, in the case of one older lady, do an end-zone dance. Wouldn't Rosa Parks be proud?

The Diallo demonstration is about a number of things: *the fetish for the "march" on the left, in the service of any* cause whatsoever; the demonstrators' hunger for press attention; the ambition of Sharpton, who hopes to become "the mayor of black New York"; and, finally and chiefly, Mayor Rudy Giuliani, whose career protest organizers hope to cripple and whose successful policing policies they hope to discredit forever. That's why the protests, cynical and laughable though they may be, ultimately could have a deadly effect.

ACTION JACKSON

The silly qualities are at the fore the day Jesse Jackson arrives. He shows up, impressively, with a mob of reporters and cameramen all his own. A line of them walks backwards, trying to get shots of Jackson as he walks arm in arm with Sharpton. Another line of reporters and cameramen awaits their arrival at the top of some steps, and the two groups seem bound for a great collision, like the clashing armies at Agincourt. Jackson's group pushes up the steps, and people are jostling in a confused, writhing scrum of elbows and shoulders and worried looks. Finally, there's the slightest whiff of what must have pervaded the famous protests of the '60s that Jackson and Sharpton so envy: danger. Only now, the risk is that a reporter might fall down the steps.

After much stumbling and squeezing, Jackson reaches his first destination: the press area, where he gives an impromptu press conference. Which is perfect: a frenzied push through the press, to get to more press. When Jackson's group goes to get arrested, they all briefly sit down, looks of delight playing on their faces. Not just a demonstration, but a sit-in! But no one wants to get arrested sitting down—which would require dragging and other unpleasantness—so they stand right back up again. There's a brief moment of drama when it seems the well-coiffed Jackson, looking like he just came from the CNN makeup room, has trouble getting back up. But soon he's standing and smiling and taking the business cards of fellow arrestees.

Jackson, along with the likes of Susan Sarandon, is part of the protesting elect. The hundreds of hoi polloi walk in a circle behind police barriers chanting "No Justice, No

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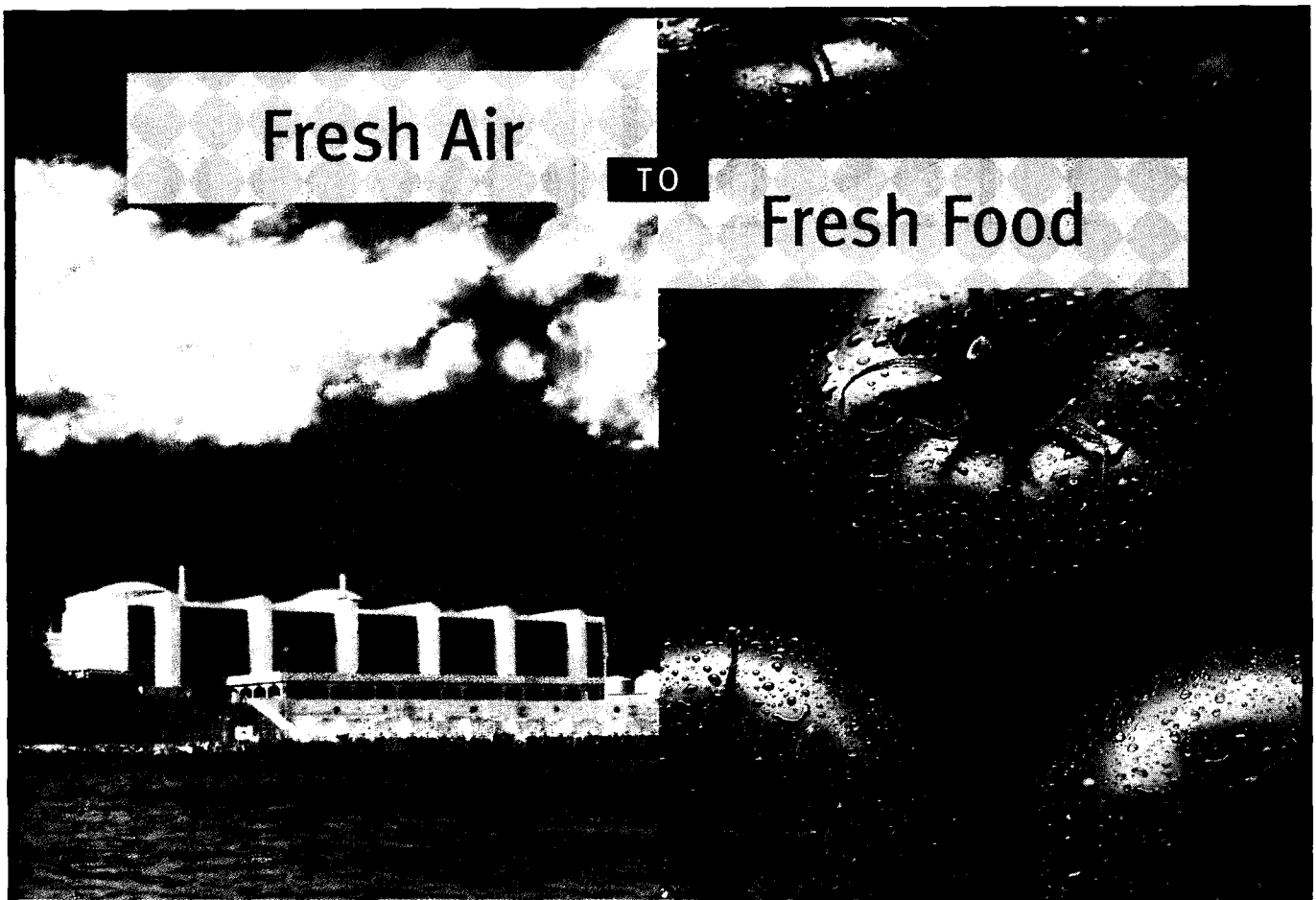

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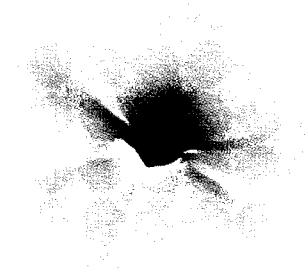

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Peace" and holding signs urging the arrest of the mayor. For these protesters, the demonstration is all about peace, love, and hating Rudy Giuliani. A daily fixture is Robert Lederman, a street artist who has been arrested some 30 times for selling his art without a permit. His specialty is drawings of Giuliani as Hitler, which protesters hold aloft. As Lederman, who like the protest organizers isn't shy around the press (he hands out a xeroxed copy of a story about himself), says, "I hope it can become about removing Giuliani from office."

Sharpton, no doubt, shares that hope. He's the protest's epicenter, surrounded always by reporters and lackeys. Behind his perpetual blank look—as if he can't be bothered to be interested in anything—must be a hard-to-repress feeling of giddy delight: So many reporters, so little time! He always dresses to the nines, three-piece suits topped off with splashy neckties. One day he's sporting a black protest rib-

For these protesters, the demonstration is all about peace, love, and hating Rudy Giuliani.

bon, the next a purple one, and the day after that—surprise!—none at all. He walks with as much of a strut as his stubby legs allow, the demagogue as popinjay. One day when it starts to sprinkle, he breaks out an umbrella as big as his ego, so enormous it could cover five or six people; but Sharpton has it all to himself.

Sharpton says he doesn't care about meeting with the mayor, who is sitting down with other critics but not with him. "I don't need company. I need justice!" he shouts into a bullhorn during one pep talk. But he must relish the prospect of a meeting; it would confirm him as New York's go-to guy of black discontent. A former detective named Graham Weatherspoon, with a left-wing group called 100 Blacks in Law Enforcement, gives the game away in a TV interview. Tall and dignified, with glistening skin and sunken cheeks that give him an apocalyptic look, like a black John Brown, Weatherspoon nearly shouts: "Rudy Giuliani, you're a dead man walking politically. . . . Mayor Giuliani is going to have to sit down with Al Sharpton, he's going to have to acquiesce to Al Sharpton. . . . You are no longer in control of the city."

With Giuliani's poll numbers plummeting, it doesn't seem such an idle rant. Giuliani's problem is that Sharpton has latched on to an easy sell: The Diallo shooting was a disgrace. One of the more affecting chants of the protesters is a simple count to 41, the number of shots the arresting officers fired. But the incident has become a bludgeon to beat back police aggressiveness generally, to reverse the policing that has helped reduce murders in New York City from 2,200 in 1992 to 600 last year. Since Giuliani's policies—including street sweeps to take guns from those carrying them illegally—disproportionally ensnare blacks, they are presumed racist by the logic of "disparate impact." But what if most crime happens in black neighborhoods? This is the obvious fact Giuliani's foes are too embarrassed to confront. Indeed, the unspoken premise of his liberal critics seems to be that guns are an intolerable scourge, unless they are being carried by young black men.

FIGHTING THE "PIGS"

The gambit of Giuliani's attackers is to posit a moral equivalence between criminal thugs and the police, which is simply the return of an old smear: That the police are "pigs." "A criminal is a criminal is a criminal," Sharpton yells into his bullhorn. Even former Democratic congressman Floyd Flake, a moderate and Giuliani ally who nonetheless got arrested in the protests, says, "People thought that they were getting rid of gangs and marauders, not exchanging them for new gangs of rogue cops whose salaries they pay." Robert Lederman, the artist with the Hitler fixation, maintains, "I would much rather deal with muggers than with armed police." Yeah, right.

Policing New York surely is a messy business. Outside the protest one day stood a 22-year-old black kid named Anthony, at headquarters to try to get back his bike confiscated by the police. He complains of getting rousted regularly by the cops, based on his appearance: a scraggly beard, an earring, a tough-looking leather jacket, a beeper on a chain, and jeans baggy enough for two. He earnestly explains he's never been in trouble with the law, but soon talks of getting arrested in connection with an incident during which he was stabbed ("a misunderstanding"), in connection with a murder at a party (he says the charges against him were eventually dropped), and the latest arrest (for alleged possession of drugs), in which he lost his bike.

Shouldn't the police be wary of Anthony? If they shouldn't be stopping him, whom should they be stopping? Certainly his neighbors at 111th and Lenox Avenue in Harlem who Anthony says are out dealing drugs on the corner every day, and certainly his acquaintances who murder people at parties. But if Sharpton & Co. get their way, more thugs will go undetected. Arrests by the Street Crimes Unit, the outfit that shot Diallo, are down by some 60 percent over the last seven weeks. That inevitably will translate into more guns in the wrong hands, more mayhem in Anthony's neighborhood, and ultimately more people dead. But with the crucial distinction that Sharpton won't be showing up to protest.

At One Police Plaza, there is an area set aside for counter-demonstrators. On the day Jackson arrived there was just one counter-demonstrator: a 73-year-old retiree from the Bronx named Freddy Schuman. Freddy is a fixture at New York Yankee games, where he roams the stands with a brightly colored sign urging the Yanks to victory and a frying pan he lets kids bang with a spoon. One of his eyes is closed, he's missing teeth, and he wears a ratty Yankees cap and jacket. Today, Freddy sports a sign proclaiming, "Freddy sez cops save lives. They don't go to purposely harm." It's a sentiment so commonsensical as to be utterly unremarkable, but it is exactly the thinking that helped rehabilitate the cops in New York and produce the ensuing drop in crime that now makes complacency so easy. Nobody pays Freddy any mind. No one even bothers to arrest him. **NR**

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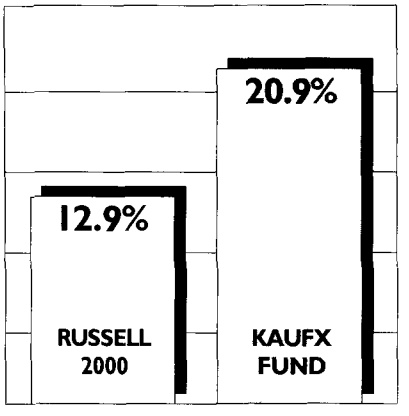

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The Political Garrison Keillor

Writer, poet-philosopher, hater.

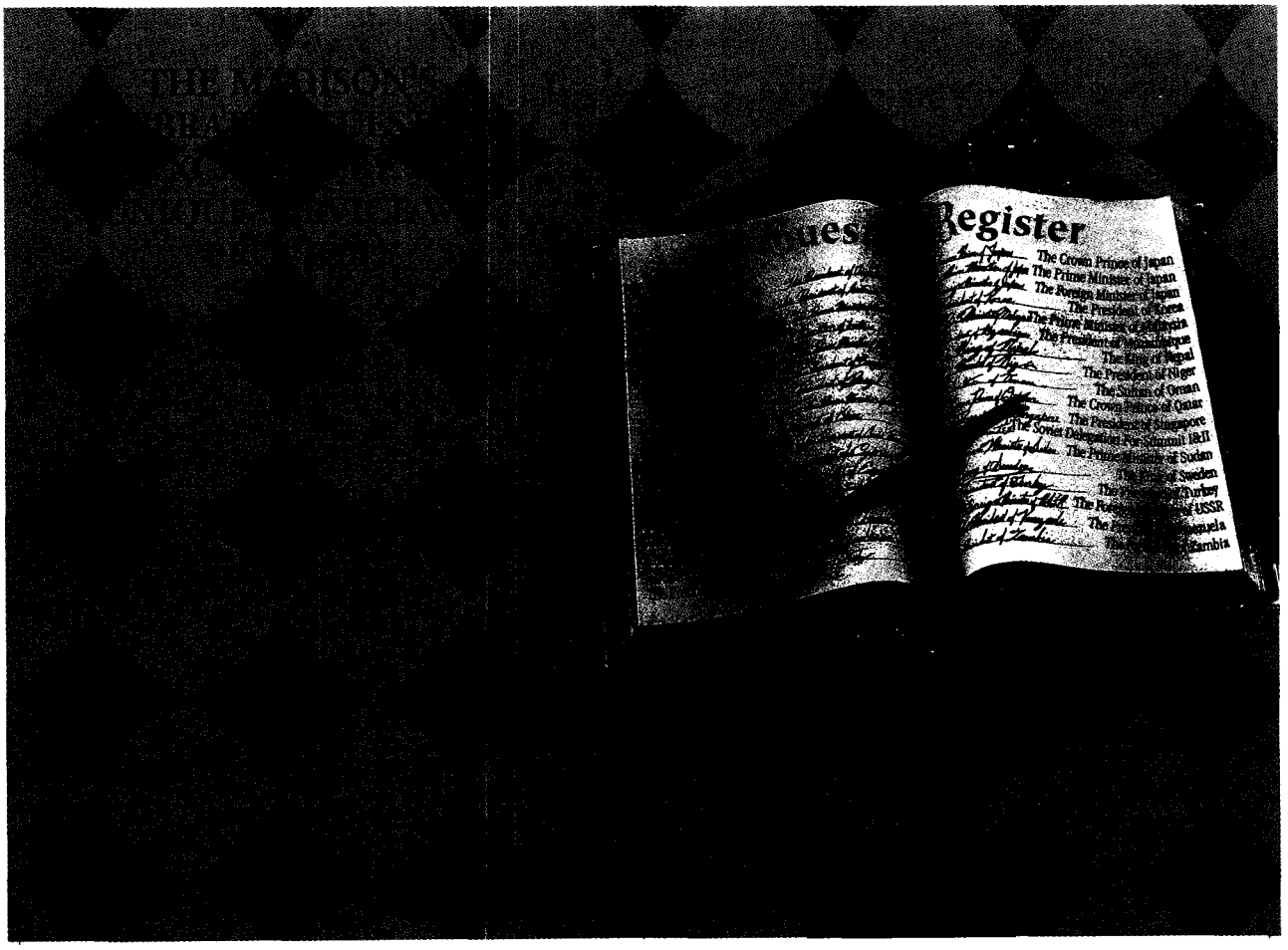
JAY NORDLINGER

He's a beloved American figure, yes, a cultural icon, the Will Rogers—no, the Mark Twain!—of our time, a voice of reason, enlightenment, and gentle humor, piped into our homes at least weekly by our Good Mother, National Public Radio. He is, as his soulmate Garry Trudeau has been reminding us lately in *Doonesbury*, a "national treasure." But has anyone bothered to notice that he is also a horrid left-liberal scold, dripping with contempt for nearly everything Middle American, so eaten by hatred of anything like conservatism and Republicanism that he threatens at any moment to seek exile in Denmark? (Oh, excuse me: He already did that, in the Reagan years.)

He, of course, is Garrison Keillor, the writer and host of *A Prairie Home Companion* who has grown rich and famous off ridiculing his fellow Minnesotans for the benefit of smirking elites everywhere. Weirdly enough, he is often hailed as the voice—or at least the chronicler—of Everyman, when instead he is a kind of anti-Everyman, a combination of H. L. Mencken and Hillary Rodham Clinton, hammering at the "booboisie" and flaunting what he takes to be his superior education and morals. This is a bittersweet time for Keillor: His darling, Bill Clinton, is still standing, but he is bloodied—almost brought down by the dark forces in American life, the same yahoos Keillor has had to fight and suffer his entire life.

On March 18, Keillor was the headliner at a traditional Washington event, the Radio and Television Correspondents Dinner. This is the same event at which the radio jock Don Imus was so shocking in 1996, telling raunchy jokes about the two Clintons, in their presence, and—worse, from the hosts' point of view—insulting the press. The First Lady was even grimmer than usual that night, and everyone else squirmed. Imus had violated the rules: You're supposed to touch the president and his wife only lightly—especially when they're fellow Children of the Sixties, for heaven's sake—and you're supposed to leave the crowd feeling pretty good about the privilege of living at the center of power.

The White House could not have been in safer hands than Keillor's. He bathed the Clintons in baby oil, massaging their most tender muscles. He began by thanking the president for his very presence, when surely the great man would have preferred "the chance to get away from Washington and its malcontents." Now he had to "sit and eat fish with a group of people who would regard your downfall as a professional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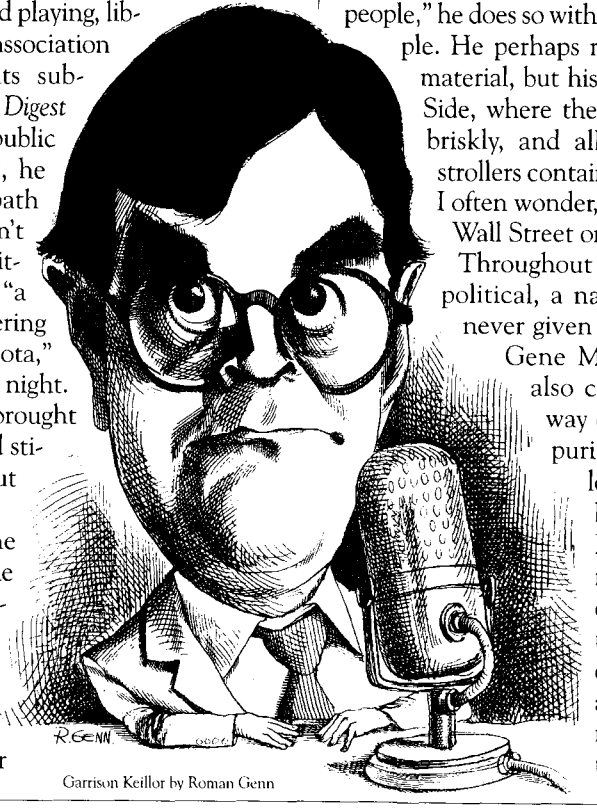
opportunity." Clinton, noted Keillor, had proven "a very durable president," who had "already gone 400 days beyond when Sam Donaldson announced his resignation." F. Scott Fitzgerald had proclaimed that there are no second acts in American lives, but, oh, "he was wrong: He did not know Mr. Clinton."

And Hillary, fair Hillary! Why run for Senate from New York when you can do it in Minnesota, "a state of polite and modest people, very few of whom shave their heads on a regular basis"? (That last would be a reference to the new Minnesota governor, Jesse Ventura, Keillor's latest obsession and—come to think of it—"professional opportunity.") If the First Lady abandoned New York for Minnesota, said Keillor, her election would be "guaranteed," if only because the home folk would be so grateful for her embrace of them. "Run, Hillary, run!" was Keillor's toasty message—not the sort of thing, to be sure, that Don Imus would have offered.

What venom Keillor spilled, he spilled mainly on Ventura, about whom he seems unable to decide whether to be more furious or more pleased. He has just written a book about the governor, a mock (and mocking) autobiography that has understandably gotten under the big guy's skin. Ventura, said Keillor with typical disingenuousness, is "angry because I wrote about him." (Keillor also writes about Clinton, but, amazingly enough, the president isn't angry at him.) Ventura is "the first governor I ever came across who can sneer and swagger convincingly"—indeed, "almost as well as Patrick Buchanan." He has "a limited view of the world," of course, but "he got elected saying that he could only promise to do his best, and I would have to say that he has kept his word."

That's Keillor: clever, but surprisingly crabbed and ungenerous for someone who has been so crowned with success. He came of age in Anoka, Minn., a town apparently accursed with fundamentalist religion. According to Keillor, the people there frowned on "dancing, drinking, card playing, liberal education, and too-friendly association with non-believers." His parents subscribed to such vile fare as *Reader's Digest* and *American Home*, but at the public library, haven of higher thought, he found *The New Yorker*, and his path was set for life. "My people weren't much for literature," Keillor has written, so for him *The New Yorker* was "a fabulous sight, an immense, glittering ocean liner off the coast of Minnesota," a beacon in the black midwestern night. Keillor is a classic American type: brought up in an atmosphere he considered stifling and bent on complaining about it for the rest of his life.

In 1960, he "ran away to the University of Minnesota," where he spent "six happy years in extravagant freedom, marching against the war, shouting epithets at visiting bigwigs . . . going to theater where the actors jumped on stage naked and confronted us with their honesty and our hopeless inhibitions," etc. Keillor is to a tee a product of that decade, enthralled with JFK, mesmerized by 11/22/63, able to recite every detail of the Buddy Holly plane crash—that kind of thing. He has also spent years cultivating his resentment of the religious-minded, whom he skewers at every opportunity (which are numerous). "When Twain wrote about the religious Right of his day, 'They are good people in the worst sense of the word,'" Keillor once reflected, "we still recognize what he meant by that. Those people are still with us."



Garrison Keillor by Roman Genn

In due course, Keillor fulfilled his dream of catching on with his favorite magazine, *The New Yorker*, for which he wrote regularly until that ghastly moment in 1992 when Tina Brown took over, rescuing the moribund journal and actually making it readable and consequential again. Brown, sniffed Keillor, hadn't "changed" the magazine, but had "obliterated" it. "So long, Mr. Shawn," he sobbed, "and good night, E. B. White." He also became a star of radio, a medium about which he is nevertheless skeptical, given the popularity of two of his bogeymen, Rush Limbaugh and Howard Stern. "If you look at them in an objective way," he said in a 1994 interview, "they're really trashy people . . . But when you tune them in, you're drawn into their point of view. That's how Hitler came to power, you know." (Ah, the delicate brush for which Keillor is fabled.)

Along the way, Keillor managed to realize still another American Dream, taking as his second wife a woman he had met when she was a Danish exchange student. This facilitated his flight to Scandinavia, where he played brooding expat for a while before trekking back home to the limelight. He now seems resigned to America, dividing his time between the Upper West Side of Manhattan and a place in Wisconsin. He tells his New York audiences things like, "I'm a real midwestern kind of guy: I know what kind of leaves make the best toilet paper." Even when he seems to be talking fondly about "his people," he does so with a wink at those who are his actual people. He perhaps returns to the Midwest to collect his material, but his soul seems firmly on the Upper West Side, where the votes are Democratic, his books sell briskly, and all morning long black women push strollers containing tousle-haired white kids. (Where, I often wonder, are their mothers? Brokering deals on Wall Street or in bed consuming bonbons?)

Throughout his career, Keillor has been intensely political, a nasty polemicist—yet somehow, he is never given the credit, or blame, for this. He is a Gene McCarthy-style progressive, yes, but also curiously conservative, in the killjoy way of Ralph Nader, who once had fits of puritan apoplexy over something so frivolous on cars as tail fins. (Keillor, as it happens, frequently boasts of his Puritan ancestry, in the guise of deprecating it.) Similarly, Keillor decries cable television, e-mail, and other trappings of modern society. In fact, one of the things he liked about his adoptive country was that "planning makes Denmark look good. It's why there's no sprawl of junkyards and

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trailer parks and Mr. Donut drive-ins . . . " What's more, "Everybody ought to have a Dane to have lunch with: They will listen to you and they will not judge you." Keillor will, however, and when he wants to denounce American culture, he simply reaches for one of his swearwords—"Wal-Mart" or "Gap" will do—and there you have it.

For Bill Clinton, his affection is almost quaint. Shortly after the 1992 election, Keillor wrote, "These are good times to be alive in America. The tide of hogwash is receding a little and, with the Republicans in eclipse, pious humbug also is slightly reduced. The young president seems to have a tonic effect on everything," and—get this—"he isn't full of himself."

■

The shy Minnesotan with the soothing voice has denounced the GOP as 'a criminal party,' whose policies are 'evil'—'deeply evil.'

■

Clinton, he would later write, is "full of soul," and, better yet, "he is a president who reads books"! He has "the dignity of someone who has always known who he is" (seriously). And why did he clean up in 1996? Because "you look at him at the lectern and you look at the sweaty young Republicans," and "it's not a hard choice." (As for Reagan, "he was a charming man who twinkled at people, and there's your explanation for the Conservative Revolution. It wasn't about his ideas.")

For Keillor, the Republican party isn't merely laughable or distasteful. Oh no. He declared in 1995, "This is a criminal party." Its policies are "evil." "Deeply evil." And "I am truly ashamed of religious people who have signed up" with the GOP, because "this is truly a betrayal of their own faith. This is not"—and here is the Rev. Keillor, raging from the pulpit—"what Jesus called us here to do." Newt Gingrich, for example, according to the Nonjudgmental One, "has no real grounding or base in the faith. He is not a man of faith."

When the Republicans swept Congress in 1994, Keillor perceived a new night fallen. "Out of the mists," he wrote, "dim figures emerged, and lo and behold, it is the same old gang of fraternity boys, geezers in golf pants, cheese merchants, cat stranglers, corporate shills, Bible beaters, swamp developers, amateur cops, and old gasbags that we have known since time immemorial." (Hang on a second: cheese merchants?) As Keillor saw it, we were "back in the Gilded Age, among portly men who regard great wealth as the surest sign of Divine Grace and who amuse themselves by railing against the poor and calling for more prisons. Thomas Nast, Mark Twain, H. L. Mencken, Sinclair Lewis—every satirist there ever was has watched this same parade go tooting past."

And this cuts to the heart of it: Here is Keillor's canon, here is the tradition in which he places himself, and he is not wrong—he does indeed resemble those men, not least in their intolerance for the beliefs and habits of ordinary people, especially those hooked on the Bible.

Throughout Clinton's impeachment ordeal, Keillor was by turns indignant, sarcastic, and despairing. No muckraker, he had written in 1994 that, "when I was 16, my parents were like the Washington press. They felt that they were entitled to know a great deal more about my life than they knew." And yet, a little earlier, he had been scandalized by the yawning corruption of the Bush administration, including the savings-and-loan debacle: "the hundreds of billions of tax dollars spent to pay off the bad debts of guys in loud sportcoats, the years of generous support of the Saddam Hussein regime during which American cities rotted and decayed," and so on. Clinton, by contrast, received Keillor's wholehearted and combative support. Wrote Keillor, "The America that the Thirteen Angry House Managers envision is a rather bleak place where most of us would be in prison or within view of it." If the Republicans could cramp a president "full of soul," what would they do to the rest of us sinners?

Lately, Keillor has been afforded some relief, not only by the defeat of the anti-Clinton SS but by the arrival of a juicy new target, Gov. Ventura, whom he calls "Jesse Helms with pectorals and a stronger chin." Following the recent election, Keillor wrote, "We are a state of highly repressed Scandinavians"—this is just his shtick, mind you; he's not referring to himself—"and sometimes we like to surprise ourselves. Minnesota is a $12 billion-a-year operation, and we have taken the janitor and made him the CEO."

Keillor's new book is a smug little volume titled *Me*, which purports to be the memoir of a Ventura-like governor "as told to" the master himself, Keillor. The work is a compendium of every left-wing bias, crotchet, and shibboleth imaginable. From the phony dedication to the final sentence, it is an attack on Ventura and on right-oriented populism generally, but it is also—even primarily—a tribute to the intelligence, humanity, and wit of the "ghost," Keillor. In his author's note, Keillor states formulaically that the book "should not be construed in any way as an autobiography of an actual governor of Minnesota, God bless him"—but we are not to take that seriously. And he doesn't really mean, "God bless him," either. What he means is closer to, "Damn him to hell."

The book opens with, "The day of my conception was a pellucid June afternoon" (about which, more in a moment). Keillor waits until the second sentence to go racial, mentioning a table in a country club at which "no Jews or Negroes" have ever sat. Of course, the only people left in America who use the word "Negro" are Keillor types, who use it to convey their impression of what conservatives think of black people. In fact, *Me* is a perfect expression of what left-liberals think, when they are thinking most crudely, about what conservatives think. Keillor is ever on the alert for boobish anti-elitism, as when he has his protagonist say, "The votes of truckers count just as much as those of people who read the *New York Times*." Sometimes the protagonist breaks the narration to joust with the ghost. "You are not a writer," he says at one point, "only a ghost. This is my story. I don't want to find words like 'pellucid' in here."

You understand, don't you? The likes of Keillor know what "pellucid" means and the likes of Ventura do not. All right, then.

The protagonist grows up in a pathetic home, which includes, predictably, a kooky grandmother who passes out

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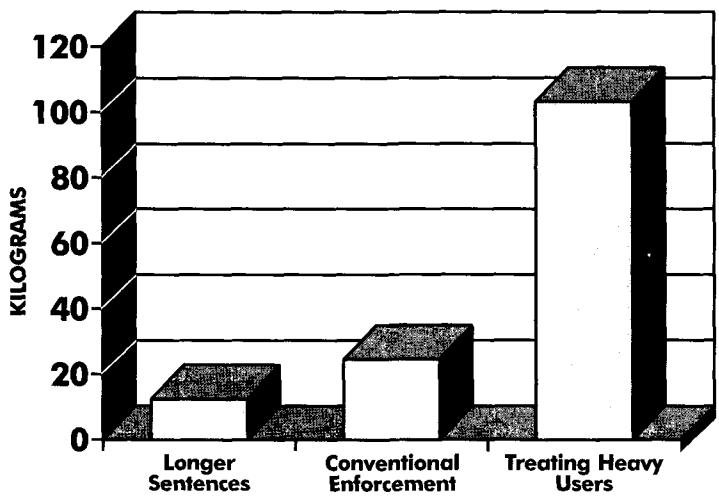
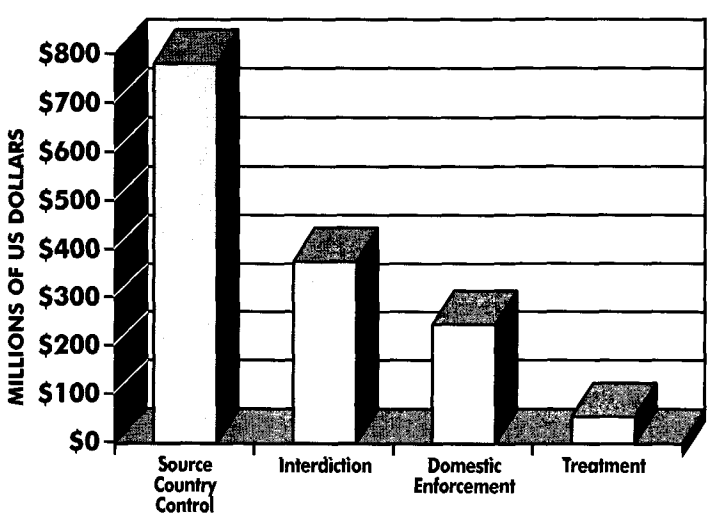


COST OF REDUCING COCAINE CONSUMPTION BY 1%



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religious pamphlets. The young man takes up bodybuilding and eventually joins the Navy, becoming a "Walrus" (not a SEAL, as the real-life Ventura did). The Walruses are a bunch of savage louts who bark in code, have a secret handshake, and live to destroy. When they are ordered to Vietnam, the Ventura character mouths ideas that we are intended to accept as moronic: "This is a time for us all to make sacrifices. America's strategic interests are threatened by Communist-led wars of so-called national liberation [Keillor, of course, doesn't consider them wars of "so-called" national liberation at all], and if Vietnam falls, Cambodia is next, Laos, Malaysia . . . The Red Wave could spread . . . " (Odd how the domino theory is absurd to all but the Cambodians and Laotians, at least those who are still alive.)

The war in Keillor's conception is a fantasy, a Marxist cartoon, as though designed to confirm draft evaders and protesters in the choices they made. The U.S. troops are mindless and bloodthirsty rubes who exult in devastation and refer to the Vietcong as "atheist midgets." It's only satire, sure, but the author's evident disdain for the soldiers who served in Vietnam is nonetheless astonishing. When he writes the phrase "the American fighting man," he does so ironically, and his devotees are meant to snort, which no doubt they do.

In time, the protagonist returns from Southeast Asia and discovers the marvel of professional wrestling. Soon he is prancing in arenas that roar with "mouth-breathers and people who think Elvis is talking to them through the mail slot and women with many interesting tattoos and the Flat Earth people and men obsessed over the secret covenants of the world Zionist U.N." (But, come now, doesn't everyone know that it's the U.N. that despises Zionism?) He is enticed into politics, running for governor on Minnesota's Ethical Party ticket, and wins. In short order, he becomes a candidate in the 2000 presidential campaign (unlike the real Ventura), competing against the good and decent Al Gore—who, truth be told, is probably too good and decent to be elected by the Barnum-happy public.

That, essentially, is the book. Did I mention that it is droll, inventive, beautifully literate, and occasionally even brilliant? So is Keillor. And that's the tragedy of it. He is a man of impressive gifts, but he becomes so jittery with his anti-conservative tics that he can hardly see or write straight. So reflexively ideological is he in his politics that he winds up saying jarringly stupid things. He, like his models Twain, Mencken, and Lewis, is a hater, and on many days he fails to harness that rollicking hatred. He is like millions of other small-town kids who chafe at the Babbittry they see all around them. But most grow out of it. Keillor warns conservatives that they are "in danger of becoming the party of Uncle Harrys, the uncle with the big eyebrows who came over for a big Sunday dinner and grumped about the damned liberals," but it is he who is Uncle Harry, a leftist curmudgeon who is perpetually grumping about the conservatives and moralizing about the moralists.

Keillor is now in his mid 50s, prolific and versatile. He has many more writing years ahead of him. Perhaps he should aim a bit higher than Al Franken (author of the subtle tract *Rush Limbaugh Is a Big Fat Idiot*). He might consider ending his adolescent rebellion, getting morally and critically serious, and wowing one and all with a new maturity—before he drowns in a sea of his own crazy bile. **NR**

Reagan Country, Then and Now

The conservative quandary in California.

LOU CANNON

ONLY yesterday, or so it seems, California was Reagan Country, and the dependable western anchor of the Republican party's successful Sun Belt strategy. Until 1992, every GOP presidential nominee in the second half of the century carried California except for Barry Goldwater in the Lyndon Johnson landslide of 1964. When Gray Davis routed Dan Lungren in 1998, he became only the fourth Democrat this century to win the California governorship.

That was then and this is now. In 1992, Bill Clinton defeated President George Bush by a plurality, with an assist from Ross Perot. In 1996, Clinton won a majority on his own. Then in 1998, with two-term Republican governor Pete Wilson ineligible to succeed himself, the bottom dropped out for the GOP. State attorney general Lungren, a conservative who had been expected to mount a strong campaign, lost by 20 percentage points. State treasurer Matt Fong blew a mid-campaign lead in the U.S. Senate race and lost by 10 points to Barbara Boxer, the supposedly vulnerable liberal Democratic incumbent. The Republicans also suffered disastrous state-legislative losses with potential national consequences. After the 2000 census, a Democratic-controlled legislature is likely to pass a redistricting bill that could cost the GOP several House seats and perhaps even control of that chamber.

What happened? How did California become Clinton Country? And how did Lungren, whom NATIONAL REVIEW dubbed "the great right hope," suffer such a one-sided loss? Defeat in California is a disputatious orphan. Here are the favorite theories and alibis:

Republican moderates, among others, blame conservatives for emphasizing social issues in a state that resists government curbs on abortion, marijuana, and pornography. "California has a strong libertarian streak," observes Rep. David Dreier, an influential conservative. Lungren, who in the House had sponsored the Human Life Amendment, lost among pro-choice independents, and women. Afterward, his campaign manager Dave Puglia declared that it is impossible for a pro-life candidate to win a statewide election.

Conservatives insist that moderates, especially Wilson, bear a chunk of the blame. They claim that activist social conservatives were shunned during the Wilson years, a point that would have greater force had these conservatives turned

Mr. Cannon has reported on California politics for 40 years. His most recent book, *Official Negligence*, about the 1992 Los Angeles riots, will soon be out in paperback.

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out for Lungren. Wilson also enhanced what libertarian conservative Ron Unz calls the "toxic effect" of Proposition 187, an initiative approved by voters in 1994 but since blocked by the courts. The measure would have denied educational and most medical benefits only to illegal immigrants, but the somewhat derisive tone of Wilson's campaign in its behalf suggested to legal immigrants an attack on them as well. Lungren paid the price in 1998, winning only a fifth of Latino voters and about a fourth of Asians.

Some political analysts say that Democrats simply have run better campaigns. That was certainly true in 1992, when Bush seemed unaware of the distress of middle-class Californians after the collapse of the aerospace industry at the end of the Cold War. It was true again in 1996, when Bob Dole failed to connect with voters. Lungren's 1998 campaign was even more inept. He wasted time and resources in a futile attempt to link Davis to former governor Edmund G. (Jerry) Brown, whom Davis had served as chief of staff. The result was described at campaign's end by Bill Carrick, a savvy Democratic consultant: "A *Los Angeles Times* poll showed that more people approved of Jerry Brown than Lungren. Others vaguely associate him with Jerry's Deli or Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream, and in Oakland, where he's mayor, they like him."

It is worth noting that Brown won, in a liberal city, by promising to improve police protection and school performance and bring new business to Oakland. With few exceptions, California Democrats in the 1990s have followed Clinton's lead in using centrist slogans and symbols to expropriate popular positions of their adversaries. Davis stressed support for the death penalty and California's three-strikes law and the need to reform the state's dismal educational system—traditional Republican themes. Davis also did what Clinton (and Lungren) could not do—cite his service in the Vietnam War, where he served as an Army captain and won a Bronze Star. "Davis is Clinton without the scandals," said state senator Jim Brulte, a cerebral Republican who contends that the Democratic approach shows that conservatives have won the war of ideas.

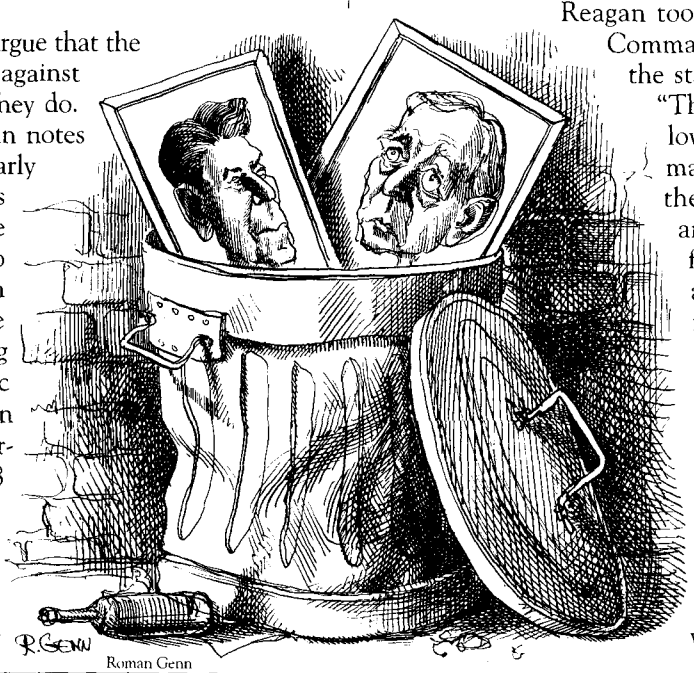
Finally, some demographers argue that the tide of history is running against Republicans no matter what they do. Republican analyst Tony Quinn notes that the recession of the early 1990s prompted Republicans and Reagan Democrats to move in droves from California to other western states, which became more conservative while California was becoming more liberal. Demographic determinists also point to an increase of minority voters, particularly Latinos, who were 8 percent of the electorate in 1994 and 14 percent in 1998. They are projected to be a third of voters by 2010. If Latinos and Asians vote on their 1998 pattern, observed *Los Angeles Times* columnist George Skelton, "it doesn't take much imagination to envision California going the way of Hawaii—dominated perpetually by Democrats."

All these analyses have something to recommend them, and they are not mutually exclusive. Puglia's view that pro-life candidates cannot win in California may be overwrought, but they undoubtedly face an uphill fight. And Wilson's campaign for Proposition 187, and to some degree the initiative itself, unquestionably alienated Latinos. There is also no doubt that California Democrats have run better campaigns than their GOP counterparts, with the exceptions of Wilson's two campaigns for governor.

Should Republicans concede the state to the Democrats in 2000? This won't happen and shouldn't. Demographics and Democrats deserve their due, but all is not lost for Republicans in California. Before examining the potential for a GOP comeback, let us take a closer look at "Reagan Country," in which the salient features of the political landscape were different than they seem in memory.

Ronald Reagan came along when middle-class Americans felt stifled by the Great Society, angered at campus disturbances and ghetto riots and worried about U.S. involvement in Vietnam. Reagan had the advantage of being a political outsider. The party he sought to inspire and lead had been divided by the bitter 1964 California primary in which Barry Goldwater clinched the GOP nomination by narrowly defeating Nelson Rockefeller. Goldwater was subsequently demonized and defeated, while Reagan became a national political figure with a stirring televised speech in the nominee's behalf on October 27, 1964. Johnson carried California by a million votes, and Reagan was given little chance of winning the governorship in 1966. Strategists for incumbent governor Edmund G. (Pat) Brown were so convinced that Reagan was their salvation that they smeared his primary opponent, former San Francisco mayor George Christopher, to help Reagan win the primary. Christopher, meanwhile, attacked Reagan as a "Goldwater Republican" and sure loser.

Be careful what you wish for, as the old saying has it. Reagan took as his mantra the Eleventh Commandment of Gaylor Parkinson, the state GOP chairman of the day: "Thou shalt not speak ill of any fellow Republican." He won the primary, then sought and obtained the endorsement of Christopher and other moderates. Reagan's foes alternately portrayed him as an extremist and an unqualified actor who had been upstaged by a chimpanzee in *Bedtime for Bonzo*. The first attack failed because it was inaccurate and the second because it was irrelevant. (Reagan told me years later that he had indeed been upstaged by Bonzo, as humans tend to be by animals.) Reagan was proud to be an actor. After



Roman Genn

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winning in a landslide, he was asked what kind of governor he would be: "I don't know. I've never played a governor."

The role suited Reagan, although it took many rehearsals. During his first year in office he agreed to a larger-than-necessary tax increase. Subsequently Reagan tried with some success to curb the growth of government. He was a practical dreamer who chipped away at the status quo. Reagan's conservatism was tempered by the political reality of having a Republican majority in both houses of the legislature in only one of his eight years as governor. But Democrats respected him politically because he could mobilize public opinion and personally because he rarely took himself too seriously and always kept his word. In his second term, Reagan negotiated an artful compromise with Democrats that raised the grants of the neediest welfare recipients while cracking down on welfare fraud. He set aside more parklands than any other governor in California history and stopped the Army Corps of Engineers from building a high dam that would have flooded magnificent Round Valley on the state's northern coast. He signed an abortion-rights bill that was backed by a majority of Republican legislators, including an assemblyman named George Deukmejian who would be elected to the first of two terms as governor two years after Reagan became president.

■

Yearning for another Reagan, some California conservatives are casting hopeful glances at George W. Bush.

■

Reagan and Deukmejian were the only leaders that the land of memory called Reagan Country ever knew. Politically, they were invincible. Each won ten elections for various offices, if Reagan's four presidential-primary victories are included. It is because of their success—and, to be fair, the success of Pete Wilson—that California acquired an inflated reputation as a Republican bastion. In reality the state has been in near-balance for four decades, with a slight edge to the Democrats except in those elections when Republicans have fielded superior candidates. After Reagan, Jerry Brown won back-to-back victories in gubernatorial races against GOP moderates. Wilson, who upset Brown in a 1982 Senate race and won reelection, is the only Republican elected to the U.S. Senate from California since 1976. Republicans have controlled both houses of the state legislature only once in 40 years and usually not either house. Reagan Country came into existence because of Reagan. It vanished into the mists when Deukmejian left office in 1991.

Today, as Republicans again seek a unifying leader, it is often said that a conservative cannot carry California. If so, that's good news for Democrats. Conservatives firmly control the California GOP, as they demonstrated at a recent state convention where a moderate challenge to the leadership was soundly rejected. The "rock star" of the convention, as the *Los Angeles Times* put it, was Rep. James Rogan, fresh from the impeachment wars. He is in trouble in his San Gabriel Valley district, less because of impeachment than because of demographic changes. Rogan is being urged to run for the Senate in 2000 against the formidable Dianne Feinstein; the GOP nomination is probably his for the asking if he does.

The Senate race aside, the question remains whether the GOP presidential nominee can carry California in 2000. It is an important question, for it is difficult to see how the Republicans can regain the White House if they lose California. Steve Merksamer, who ran Deukmejian's gubernatorial campaigns and was his chief of staff, disputes the conventional notion that a conservative cannot carry the state. But he believes that only a conservative who displays the "tolerance and inclusion" and the "generous nature" of Reagan and Deukmejian can indeed win.

There were several occasions where Reagan and Deukmejian departed from conservative orthodoxy on matters of conscience. Homosexual behavior was a highly charged issue in California in the Reagan years. Early in his governorship, Reagan's administration was rocked by an overblown "homosexual scandal" involving key aides. Later, Reagan introduced conjugal visits into California's prisons after being told they would reduce homosexual assaults. In 1978, a fringe conservative named John Briggs qualified a ballot initiative to bar homosexuals from teaching in public schools. Reagan, out of office and gearing up for his 1980 presidential run, was advised to say that the issue was a matter for voters to decide, a dodge used by many Republicans that year. But Reagan believed that teachers, like everyone else, should be judged on the basis of their conduct rather than their lifestyle. He opposed the Briggs initiative, assuring its defeat.

Deukmejian, who had been raised on stories of the Armenian genocide and was deeply offended by apartheid, decided in 1986 to divest California's investments in South Africa. He signed a bill by liberal Maxine Waters, then a state legislator, to accomplish this purpose. In 1989, after a massacre of children at a Stockton school, Deukmejian signed another Democratic bill intended to ban assault weapons.

GEORGE W. ARRIVES

California conservatives yearn for another Reagan or Deukmejian. After the calamity of the 1998 election, they searched beyond the state's borders and found George W. Bush, the Texas governor who calls himself a "compassionate conservative." Whether Bush is a long-distance runner remains to be seen, but he meets the "tolerant and inclusionary" test. He is also personable, in the manner of Reagan, a quality that often matters in California. In January, a majority of Republican state legislators urged Bush to run. In March, he was endorsed by 19 of the state's 24 GOP House members. Two aspects of the Bush groundswell are notable: its breadth and the high degree of enthusiasm by conservative officeholders. House supporters range from John Doolittle on the right to Steve Horn, a true moderate. Dreier heads the California House members committed to Bush. Another Bush backer is assemblyman Bruce Thompson, who has strong ties to the Christian Right and is California's most conservative legislator.

There is no mystery about the reason for the Bush boom.

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"Losing is a great unifier," says Brulte, "and Republicans of every description lost in 1998." Dreier says that California Republicans have a "thirst to win" and that Bush is the likeliest winner. Merksamer, who has not endorsed anyone, says Californians prefer westerners and that Bush projects a "western image like Goldwater and Reagan did." Quinn notes that Davis carried 15 legislative districts now represented by Republicans, some of whom will be forced out by the state's term-limits law in 2000. Without a strong presidential candidate, several of these districts could be lost.

Bush appeals to endangered Republicans because he is a proven winner in a populous and diverse state with many similar characteristics to California, including a high-tech industry, an export-based economy, and significant numbers of Hispanics (called Latinos in California). The latter point is crucial, because Bush received roughly half of the Hispanic vote in Texas when he was reelected last year. Reagan and Deukmejian obtained 40 percent or more of a much smaller Latino vote, as well as a majority of Asians. A repeat of Lungren's showing among Latinos in 2000 would translate into a million-vote margin for Democrats in California, too much to overcome in other constituencies.

Solving the Latino equation will not be easy for the GOP in California even if Bush is the nominee. As Unz observes, alienation from the GOP runs deep among immigrants, abetted by changes in federal law that make it easier to deport legal immigrants for minor and long-ago offenses. But Democrats may suffer a backlash if they overdraw the portrait of the GOP as "nativist" and anti-Latino, particularly since Wilson has decided not to run for president. A. G. Block, editor of the nonpartisan *California Journal*, says, "With Wilson out of the picture, Democrats could go too far with this. My sense is that people are tired of the issue."

Politics is a contest between people as well as policies, and Bush presently has an advantage over Gore. A recent survey commissioned by GOP consultant Joe Shumate gave Bush a 51–43 lead over Gore in California. Significantly, Bush led across the Republican spectrum and also among independents. The latter point could be crucial. Politics has changed since Reagan's day, and the "kids of Reagan Democrats," as Shumate calls them, are now apt to be registered as "decline to state," the California equivalent of independent, or in a minor party.

There is still the abortion issue. Bush says he favors a constitutional amendment banning abortion but doesn't think Americans are ready for it, a position with something for everybody that probably satisfies no one. What the Bush line lacks in specificity it makes up for in accuracy, at least in California, and it may enable him to navigate his way through the primaries. No doubt he will be pressed by both sides to be more specific in the general election, but Brulte, who is pro-life, says that Bush's statement is good enough for him. Both Brulte and Shumate dispute the notion that a pro-life candidate cannot carry California. "But he has to be tolerant pro-life, projecting a view that he isn't judging others who disagree with him," Shumate says.

There's that word "tolerance" again. It was big in Reagan Country, and it may be exactly the quality Republicans need to stage an improbable comeback in California. **NR**

The Spirit of '52

Yes, Taft lost—but gained something, too.

LEE EDWARDS

PRINCIPLE or popularity? It's a choice political movements always face sooner or later. And it's a choice conservatives are having to make now, as the 2000 presidential race begins. The glittering national ratings of Texas governor George W. Bush have led many conservatives to endorse him; but other conservatives are opting for candidates to whom they are closer philosophically.

It's a tough decision—and one that conservatives have had to make before. In 1952, the contest for the GOP nomination was essentially between Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower and Sen. Robert A. Taft—between eastern liberals and midwestern conservatives, between "modern" Republicans and "regular" ones, between pragmatists eager to win and idealists for whom principle was as important as victory. In the short term, the idealists lost. But by sticking to principle, they managed to advance their cause in the long run.

On Sunday evening, July 6, 1952, the day before the Republican convention opened, Sen. Taft conducted a news conference at the Conrad Hilton Hotel in Chicago. He held high a large bundle of telegrams—530 of them—from delegates pledged to him until hell froze over. "It was perhaps the most impressive display of political strength made by any political leader in American history," wrote Richard Rovere, a liberal journalist. Rovere was not the only one to note the strong emotions that Taft aroused among his delegates, who saw in the Ohio senator not just a candidate but a political savior. Herbert Hoover, the only living Republican ex-president, endorsed Taft warmly, saying, "This convention meets not only to nominate a candidate but to save America." Every Taft delegate believed that in his heart.

Taft seemed certain to win the 604 delegates needed for the nomination. His organization had apparently secured every possible political base, from the platform committee and credentials committee to the convention chairman. But the Eisenhower forces found a chink by challenging accredited delegates from the South, especially in Texas. Two Texas delegations had come to Chicago, one pledged largely to Taft, the other to Eisenhower, with each claiming to be the legitimate representatives of the Lone Star State.

The Eisenhower people denounced what they called "the Texas steal"; in a bit of street theater, masked "bandits" with guns carried placards that read "Taft Steals Votes" while other signs proclaimed that "RAT" stood for "Robert A. Taft." A furi-

Mr. Edwards is the author of *The Conservative Revolution: The Movement that Remade America* (The Free Press), from which this article is adapted.

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ous Taft replied that he had never stolen anything in his life and that the delegates had been chosen according to accepted Republican-party procedures of more than 80 years' standing.

Taft was right: The stealing charge was, to use one of Ike's favorite words, tommyrot. But the Eisenhower managers used the GOP's lust for victory and the general's five-star aura to successfully challenge slates in Georgia and Louisiana as well as in Texas. The convention delegates wanted to nominate Taft, but they had also seen polls indicating that Ike would beat any Democrat by a wide margin. Gallup had Eisenhower defeating Gov. Adlai Stevenson of Illinois, the likely Democratic nominee, by 59 to 31 percent. In a similar test between Taft and Stevenson, the latter held a 45-to-44 advantage. Republicans loved Taft, observed one commentator, but they loved victory more.

On the first ballot, the count stood at Eisenhower 595, Taft 500 (30 delegates having apparently noted an early frost in the nether regions), Earl Warren 81, Harold Stassen 20, and another general, Douglas A. MacArthur, 10. There was no second ballot as Minnesota asked to be recognized and changed its vote from Stassen to Eisenhower. Sen. John Bricker, for Taft, and Sen. William Knowland, for Warren, moved that the nomination be made unanimous.

There were plenty of recriminations in Taft's camp. He had been overconfident about the New Hampshire primary, which he lost to Eisenhower. He had not appreciated the significance of the Texas challenge. Taft also carried the burden of being seen as a regional candidate, who lacked substantial support in the populous Pacific coast, let alone the eastern states that still ruled the Republican party. The easterners, led by Gov. Thomas E. Dewey of New York, regarded Taft as an isolationist, a Jeffersonian reactionary, and a probable loser. They wanted to win and believed they would win with the war hero Eisenhower, a strong internationalist who was sympathetic to "modern" Republicanism, with its commitment to efficiently managed government.

Most important, there was no conservative movement that Taft could call on in a time of crisis. In fact, wrote Frank Hanighen in *Human Events*, the "capitalists" who should have been supporting Taft's ideas were "either stupidly donating money to foundations which oppose his ideas or complacently waiting for his triumph at the polls." Some things never change.

So what was Taft to do now that the party he had so loyally and effectively served had spurned him? His supporters were crying and cursing and threatening to walk out. Ike, reversing the usual practice, visited Taft in his Chicago headquarters. After Eisenhower declared that Taft's cooperation in the forthcoming campaign was "absolutely necessary," the senator graciously responded that he would do "everything possible in the campaign to secure [the general's] election and to help in his administration."

Still, Taft was flooded with letters from resentful supporters who vowed to work to defeat Eisenhower. Recognizing that a divided party spelled defeat, anxious Eisenhower aides proposed a summit meeting between the two Republican leaders. Taft agreed if Eisenhower would give "certain assurances" in advance: There would be no discrimination against Taft people during or after the campaign; no censorship of Taft's proposals; a firm defense of the Taft-Hartley Labor Act; a "reasonably conservative farm policy"; and a sharp attack on President Truman's foreign policy as developed at "Yalta, Tehran, Potsdam, and Manchuria." In return, Taft promised to campaign "vigorously" for the ticket.

Following a two-hour breakfast meeting in New York City's Morningside Heights in early September, a smiling Taft informed the press that the fundamental issue of the campaign, as accepted by Ike, was "liberty against the creeping socialism in every domestic field." That fall, Ike campaigned more like Taft than Dewey. He echoed the 1952 party platform, drafted by Taft Republicans, which promised to clean up the State Department, fire the "hordes of loafers and incompetents" on the federal payroll, balance the budget, and provide a "general tax reduction."

Sometimes, Ike even sounded like Sen. Joe McCarthy, charging, for example, that a national tolerance of Communism had "poisoned two whole decades of our national life" and insinuated itself into America's schools, public forums, news channels, labor unions, "and—most terrifyingly—into our government itself."

Eisenhower swept the electoral college, 442 to 89, and helped Republicans gain narrow majorities in both houses of Congress. This impressive performance owed a lot, as his supporters had always insisted, to Eisenhower's extraordinary personal appeal. Demographic shifts, meanwhile, were breaking up FDR's coalition. The suburbs were growing, and growing Republican.

But it was thanks to Bob Taft that the Republican party was united. Many Catholic Democrats, especially those of Irish and Polish background, voted Republican because of "Korea, Communism, and Corruption." Ike carried four southern states because he had been forced to the right. Taft may have lost the nomination, but he won the election by insisting that the party and its presidential candidate wage an uncompromisingly conservative, anti-Communist campaign.

And the Eisenhower administration, working with Taft, started out reasonably conservative. Tragically, however, the partnership was not to last: Within six months Taft was dead. Without the anchor he provided, the Republicans drifted left—creating, for instance, the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare—and lost their congressional majorities in the next elections.

So, now that Republicans have finally taken Congress back, what can Taft's heirs do to ensure that their party does not again squander its opportunity by drifting leftward? His example provides clear lessons. Conservatives should set aside petty differences and unite as soon as possible behind a single presidential candidate. But they should also pledge to back the nominee, whoever he or she turns out to be, provided that moderate and liberal Republicans make the same pledge. And they should make certain, no matter the nominee, that the 2000 platform is a conservative one.

Above all, conservatives should act like conservatives, with no ifs, ands, buts, or hyphens. They should cling to certain fundamental principles—limited government, free enterprise, individual freedom and responsibility, traditional American values, a strong national defense—no matter how the polling winds blow and the heathen rage. For as Robert Taft demonstrated in 1952, integrity in victory *and* defeat is the sure foundation of a grand party—and country. **NR**

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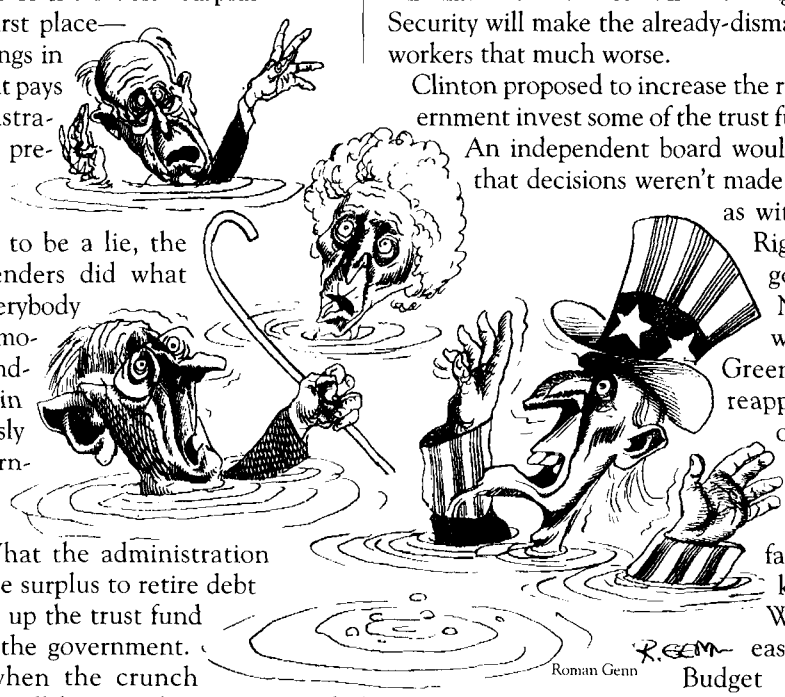
Social Calendar

Fix Social Security—but not just yet.

RAMESH PONNURU

THE press coverage of Bill Clinton's Social Security plan has tended to emphasize that it is complicated. It would be closer to the truth to say that it does not exist. If it is complicated, it is for the same reason Whitewater was complicated: It was designed that way, to obscure its fraudulence.

In his State of the Union speech this January, Clinton urged that about 60 percent of the federal budget surplus be devoted to replenishing the Social Security trust fund. Within the week, Republicans were charging Clinton with an accounting trick. Since most of the federal surplus comes from the trust fund in the first place—right now, Social Security brings in far more in payroll taxes than it pays out to retirees—the administration was double-counting by pretending to add money that was already there.



Roman Genn

Caught in what appeared to be a lie, the administration and its defenders did what comes naturally: say that "everybody does it." Republicans and Democrats alike had for years pretended that the trust fund was in fine shape while simultaneously using it to finance the government's other operations.

The sophisticated liberal argument went like this: What the administration was really doing was using the surplus to retire debt and, at the same time, piling up the trust fund with IOUs from the rest of the government. Those IOUs meant that when the crunch comes for Social Security, it will have a claim on general federal revenues in addition to the money it raises through payroll taxes. All of the accounting rigmarole, the administration told liberal journalists, was designed to block Republican tax cuts—a cause so manifestly just, these journalists agreed, as to excuse a little deception.

Promising to fund Social Security through general revenues had long been a controversial idea among liberals. The program would become more redistributive, since the income tax is more progressive than the payroll tax, but, by the same token, also more vulnerable to attacks as a form of welfare. What the promise does not do is actually raise revenues. When the crunch comes, the government will have to raise taxes and cut benefits by exactly as much as it would have to do if it dispensed with the IOU scheme altogether.

Will retiring debt make this dilemma easier, as even some Republicans seem to think? It won't make anything worse, but if the idea is that retiring the debt will make it easier for the government to borrow when it needs to cover the Social Security shortfall, this plan is misconceived. Future borrowing will still be immense and swamp the amount of debt that will have been retired. And feeding more money to Social Security will make the already-dismal return it offers today's workers that much worse.

Clinton proposed to increase the return by having the government invest some of the trust fund in the private sector. An independent board would supposedly make sure that decisions weren't made on a political basis, just as with the Federal Reserve. Right—the same Fed that goosed the economy for Nixon, the same Fed whose chairman, Alan Greenspan, has risked his reappointment by speaking out against this plan. With this much money to play with, the government could hardly fail to distort capital markets.

With all these flaws, it was easy for the Congressional Budget Office and General Accounting Office to pick apart Clinton's plan. In the Senate, no Democrat introduced Clinton's budget; that was left to Republican Kit Bond of Missouri, who embarrassed the administration by forcing a 97–2 vote against it. Then John Ashcroft, the other Missouri Republican, offered an amendment prohibiting government investment and prevailed, 99–0.

But Clinton's unseriousness does have consequences. Republicans may well be able to get a solid privatization plan through the Senate Finance Committee, where Democrats John Breaux of Louisiana, Bob Kerrey of Nebraska, Daniel Patrick Moynihan of New York, and probably Chuck Robb of

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Virginia are open to the idea. But beyond that, the prospects for privatization dim: The left wing of the Democratic party is opposed, the White House has plenty of practice in demagoguery on entitlements, and the usual Republicans are skittish.

The advocates of privatization should not let their remarkable success so far blind them to the political dangers. But that doesn't mean privatizers should retreat. Republican consultant Ralph Reed, noting polls that show the public would prefer individual investment to government investment, says that Republicans shouldn't be shy about picking a fight: "You have to take some risks in politics in order to win big victories. The American people are with us."

Well, not quite. As is often the case, the conservative policy position is popular until it is linked to the Republicans. The public trusts Democrats much more on the issue. This would seem to suggest that Republicans need to build up their credibility. They've taken a stab at it by proposing to take Social Security off budget. This is a substantively meaningless exercise, but it is a way of showing that the program's funds will no longer be raided. For now, though, the primary Republican task should be to persuade, not legislate.

It would be best to start outside the Social Security system. And here Clinton has suggested an idea that could prove worthwhile. In his State of the Union speech, he advocated establishing "USA Accounts"—a kind of government-matched 401(k) for workers. Since then, the administration has indicated that this match would take the form of a non-refundable tax credit. Since the worker's own contribution would also be tax-free, this looks an awful lot like a tax cut.

Conservatives are wary of the accounts, not least because Clinton proposed them. But their objections are weak. Yes, Clinton will try to make the accounts redistributive. Republicans should simply resist him. *It's an entitlement*, conservatives shudder. In terms of political psychology, however, the accounts may function less as an entitlement than some privatization schemes would. In such plans, workers' investment choices are limited to picking who will manage their accounts. This sort of privately administered entitlement wouldn't reduce the public's sense of dependence on government. USA Accounts, on the other hand, would bring millions of Americans directly into the investing class. They would get experience monitoring fund prices, calculating rates of return, and planning a portfolio. In time—and not too long a time—they would become receptive to more robust forms of privatization.

If conservatives continue to balk at USA Accounts, they have other options. Various bills before Congress, many of them sponsored by Democrats, propose expanding IRAs. That, too, would build support for privatization.

But whatever they do, Republicans need to keep the ultimate goal clear: a society where individuals and their families, not the government, have primary responsibility for providing for retirement. Achieving that goal would do more than anything else to end the interest-group liberalism that still dominates Washington. As they go about their task, Republicans need to listen to their economists—while practicing some political economy, too. **NR**

Special (k)

What else Reagan wrought.

RICHARD NADLER

REPUBLICANS celebrate Ronald Reagan for winning the Cold War, reviving the economy, and restoring American confidence. Yet this is actually to understate his contribution to his party. A technical decision of his administration in 1981 lit the fuse for an explosion of stock ownership that is transforming American politics.

Prior to that time, the dominant form of employee pension was the "defined benefit" plan. Labor unions negotiated cash benefits for each employee, calculated on the basis of years of service and a percentage of annual pay. Management, not workers, assumed fiduciary responsibility for plan investments. Government provided tax breaks to encourage this.

But the country's industrial malaise in the 1970s put many of these plans at risk. Companies went bankrupt holding millions of dollars in pension liabilities. Troubled firms with solvent plans became takeover targets for investment bankers, who questioned the rationality of freezing pension capital within companies that needed to retool. The Democratic Congress responded to worker anxiety by tightening fiduciary regulations on management and by mandating a business-funded bailout program—shackling responsible managers to the bad ones. Corporate enthusiasm for defined-benefit programs predictably waned.

All along, however, a small but influential group of companies, such as Eastman Kodak, Fisher-Price, and Procter & Gamble, had based at least some retirement benefits on profit-sharing—giving employees cash or stock based on the company's performance—rather than on defined benefits. Until 1978 the tax code continued to favor defined-benefit plans. But that year, the profit-sharing companies succeeded in securing a tax law that allowed both employers and employees voluntarily to defer "compensation" into a tax-advantaged pension plan.

What, exactly, was "compensation"? The defined-contribution revolution was itself deferred three more years while the IRS decided. The Reagan administration's 1981 ruling held that the "compensation" eligible for tax advantages included not just profit-sharing distributions and bonuses, but wages as well. The employee's contribution to his retirement plan would get the same tax break as his employer's.

The 401(k) was born. Several large profit-sharing corporations immediately filed under the new ruling, and the tax breaks soon lured other companies. By 1984, 7.5 million employees owned $92 billion in 401(k)s. Assets in such programs tripled to $277 billion in 1989, tripled again to $860

Mr. Nadler is editor of *K.C. Jones Monthly*, a midwestern journal of opinion, and the author of the forthcoming Cato Institute study "The Rise of Worker Capitalism."

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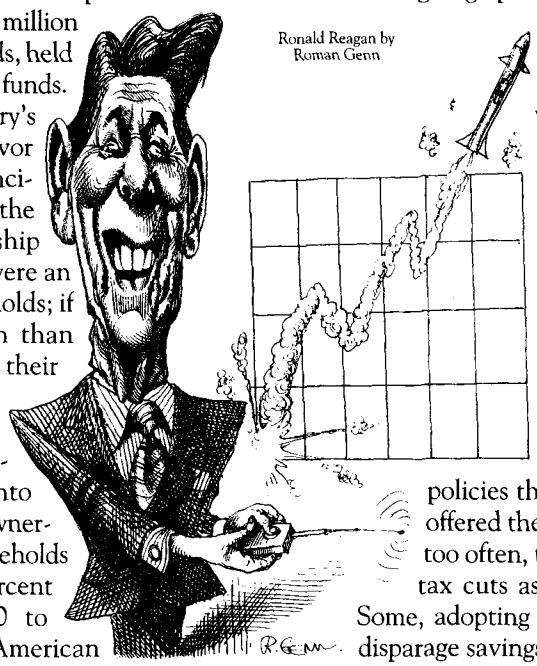
billion in 1995, and then almost doubled over the next three years, to $1.54 trillion in assets in 1998. That year, 39 million Americans participated in 401(k) programs, while other defined-contribution plans enrolled 16 million more. A trickle of stock ownership had become a flood.

This resulted in the greatest dispersion of capital ownership in human history. By 1999, 76 million Americans, 43 percent of our households, held shares in corporations or equity mutual funds.

During these same years, the country's political balance was also shifting in favor of the Republicans. This was not a coincidence. Most political analysts missed the impact of expanded stock ownership because they assumed that portfolios were an accoutrement of wealthy white households; if stock owners were more Republican than others, this was simply a function of their race, sex, income, etc.

But the rapid growth of shareholding among groups that had not been in capital markets called this assumption into question. From 1989 to 1995, stock ownership increased 46 percent among households earning $25,000 to $49,999, and 78 percent among households earning $10,000 to $24,999. Indeed, by 1995, half of American shareholders had annual incomes below $50,000. Investment in equities also increased substantially among young adults and seniors in the first decade of their retirement.

According to a January 1999 survey by Rasmussen Research for the Cato Institute, the democratization of the stock market is having large political effects. The 6,400 respondents to the survey were divided by the usual demographic markers such as race and sex, but also, for the first time, by whether they owned more than $5,000 in stocks, bonds, or mutual funds. The results: Investors, even among groups such as unmarried women and blacks, identified themselves as Republicans in substantially higher percentages than non-investors.



Ronald Reagan by Roman Genn

The GOP has been slow to recognize the ramifications of Reagan's gift. True, Republicans are for medical savings accounts, Social Security privatization, universal IRAs, and other policies that promote investment. But they have offered these programs with a bad conscience. All too often, they have denigrated investment-based tax cuts as social engineering or, worse, elitism. Some, adopting the language of their ideological foes, disparage savings incentives as "tax expenditures."

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They are wrong to do so. An investment-side politics can promote supply-side economics, making taxes both flatter and lower. Flat-tax advocates implicitly assume that the current tax code is skewed to favor consumption today over long-term wealth seeking. That's why an important feature of the leading flat-tax proposals is the mitigation of the double taxation of savings. An investment-based approach to tax cutting makes this assumption explicit.

And the problem of "social engineering"—that it's wrong for the tax code to promote individual saving for, say, health care over other personal goals—is self-correcting because of the normal processes of politics. Government programs tend to grow by showering more and more benefits on more and more voters. That's why most "targeted" programs are reduced to idiocy over time (federal aid for the education of the disadvantaged, for instance, goes to almost every school district in the country).

But the same process will make an investment-side policy better. Each time the benefit is increased, more income is exempted from double taxation. Each time the constituency is enlarged, the demand for lighter taxation grows. Each time the approved purposes for tax-exempt saving are expanded, social engineering gives way to individual freedom. Tax cuts for investment will affect the circuitry of government as a virus affects a computer, growing at its expense.

Investment-side politics builds on the Reagan administration's neglected legacy: the creation of history's first mass class of worker shareholders. If Republicans help make that class an actual majority, our political debates in the future will center not on whether to side with capital or labor but on which party can best represent worker capitalists. This is one other thing that Ronald Reagan wrought. **NR**

Off Budget

The Clinton blueprint misses the target.

LAWRENCE B. LINDSEY

As Congress and the White House prepare for another bitter budget fight, President Clinton takes the field with a budget that is, in a word, Clintonesque. The same administration that two years ago claimed the FY 2000 budget would see a deficit of $87.1 billion now claims a surplus of $117.3 billion, a swing of $200 billion. The Social Security system, which just months ago was in such bad shape that we had to "save the surplus" for years to come, now features trillions of dollars for all sorts of other spending.

A closer look at the Clinton budget—the assumptions behind it and the economic conditions that form its context—shows the desirability, indeed the prudence, of an entirely different policy route: an across-the-board personal income tax cut.

Fact Number 1: We have no idea what the budget deficit or surplus will be over the next 15 years. Clinton has treated the $4.5 trillion as money in the bank, there to be "spent." But it appeared by changing some assumptions and can disappear just as easily. Over the last three years, the average change in the deficit forecast for only the three years ahead has been $66 billion per year.

This does not mean that budgetary scoring is useless. We can tell with reasonable degrees of certainty what will happen if programmatic changes are enacted. For example, we know that the current Medicare system is horribly underfunded, with costs consistently rising faster than revenues. Clinton has proposed lowering the age of Medicare eligibility from 65 to 55 on a voluntary basis. It does not take much insight into human nature to realize that those who stand to gain the most from joining Medicare early will do so. Therefore, the underfunding problem of Medicare will grow steadily worse if we adopt the president's suggestion. And we also know with relative certainty that if this proposal is enacted it will be very difficult, if not impossible, to rescind.

The Clinton budget arithmetic is emblematic of the man himself. Give the focus group what it wants tonight. Tomorrow is another day. Congress should avoid expanding existing programs and enacting new programs that will no longer look so affordable in an economic downturn. The projected surpluses are money that may materialize, but only if we follow sensible policies, and have good luck.

Fact Number 2: To the extent we have a budget surplus now, it is because the American people are overtaxed. In the past few years the federal tax share of GDP has risen sharply, from 20.0 percent in 1995 to 21.8 percent in 1998. This rise is roughly three times as important as extra economic growth in producing the unanticipated surge in revenue since 1995. Between 1995 and 1998, GDP rose by $1,213 billion, or 16.7 percent. Federal revenue, in contrast, rose by $390 billion, or 26.9 percent. In other words, extra federal taxes took 32 percent of the total growth in GDP between 1995 and 1998.

A close examination of the data reveals that this rise in tax collections has been concentrated on the individual income tax. Corporate income taxes and social insurance taxes have risen at about the same rate as GDP, while other taxes, such as excises, have been relatively static. But personal income taxes have increased 43 percent in the last three years, two and one half times as fast as GDP. Personal income tax collections exceeded all expectations, including those of the Clinton administration. When it hiked personal tax rates in 1993, it projected personal taxes would take only 8.6 percent of GDP. In fact, they now take 10 percent.

This surge in assumed personal tax receipts is the real reason behind Clinton's sudden discovery of a $4.5 trillion budget surplus. What the surplus really means is that government will collect $4.5 trillion more in taxes from Americans than it now needs to cover spending.

Mr. Lindsey, a former governor of the Federal Reserve, is a scholar at the American Enterprise Institute and the author of *Economic Puppetmasters: Lessons from the Halls of Power* (AEI Press).

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Fact Number 3: It is nonsense to assume that "paying down the deficit" is a smarter use of this revenue surge than returning it to the taxpayer. Unfortunately, many conservatives have let their instincts overrule their logic on this issue. Instinctively conservatives (including me) loathe large debts, including large government debts. It is staggering that the U.S. government has outstanding debt of some $5.6 trillion.

But here is the real question: Let's assume that the government is really run by taxpayers (forgetting for a minute that if you leave the tax revenue with Washington, the government will spend it rather than use it to pay down the debt). Who will do a better job investing the funds for the taxpayer's benefit: the government or the taxpayer himself?

Right now the cost of government borrowing is about 4.8 percent. So, leaving the money with Uncle Sam to "pay down the debt" saves taxpayers this cost and thus can be said to create a 4.8 percent rate of return. But in today's economy there are myriad ways to get a higher rate of return than that (have you checked your mutual fund lately?). So it would make sense for individuals to borrow at that 4.8 percent rate, invest the borrowed funds, and pocket the proceeds from any returns over 4.8 percent.

And Americans are basically doing just that. Mortgage debt to finance new housing is skyrocketing. And people are refinancing their existing homes, but not accelerating repayment of their mortgages in the process. People are extending their repayment periods and taking money out of their homes. Why should we assume that now is a good time for the government to start paying off its debts when all other rational economic actors are doing the opposite?

Fact Number 4 : A tax cut is an insurance policy against any future economic downturn. And the warning signs are flashing.

The personal saving rate, at zero, is the lowest in recorded history. There is very little room for a downturn of household incomes that would not adversely affect spending as well. Corporate balance sheets have stopped improving and are now becoming worse. And economic growth is becoming increasingly consumption oriented. In the year ended in the third quarter of 1998, increased consumption accounted for 83 percent of the increase in GDP. The U.S. will run its largest current-account deficit in history to keep its economic expansion going—borrowing nearly $300 billion more from the rest of the world than we lend to it.

This is not a sustainable situation. An across-the-board personal tax cut would maintain household cash flow even if market assets decline. This would help maintain overall spending and limit risk of a downturn. And, unlike a permanent expansion in a new government entitlement, it won't impose an enduring financial drain. Congress has shown no reluctance in the past to raise taxes when the money is needed.

Most important, a tax cut gives the money to the people who earned it in the first place and who will get the highest return possible on it. In any budget battle, the taxpayers ought to be the winners. **NR**

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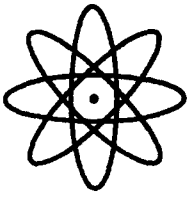

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Tax Man

An Al Gore vulnerability.

LAWRENCE KUDLOW

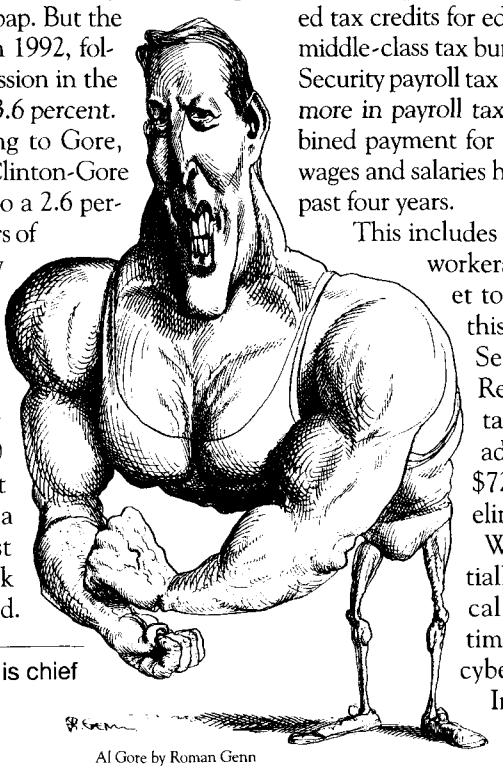
FORGET fundraising scandals and creative autobiography: Al Gore's chief vulnerability may be taxes. As a senator, he voted in favor of President Carter's windfall-profits energy tax and against President Reagan's supply-side tax cuts. He voted repeatedly against a lower capital-gains tax and any IRA savings expansion. He also opposed the tax-limiting version of the balanced-budget amendment.

Nothing has changed. In a recent talk with a group of black newspaper publishers, Gore declared, "We don't need more Republican 'retronomics.'" Attacking the GOP Congress's plan to lower taxes by roughly $800 billion over the next ten years, Gore decried "open-ended, extremely risky tax schemes—just sort of like a roulette table." In fact, he added, "we've tried this kind of budget before and it nearly wrecked the United States. It drove our economy into the ditch."

Some ditch. Reagan's marginal tax rate reduction revived a lifeless economy, creating 18 million new jobs with close to a 4 percent yearly economic-growth rate in the 1980s. As inflation melted down and wage, price, and energy controls were eliminated, reduced interest rates spawned the technological revolution in semi-conductor chips, cellular communications, and personal computers that remains the backbone of our economy.

Gore, of course, has a different version of history: "When we took over almost seven years ago now, this country was in deep trouble." This is familiar White House pap. But the Bush economy was recovering nicely in 1992, following the shortest and shallowest recession in the post-war era. The real growth rate was 3.6 percent.

"We turned that around," according to Gore, "and, boy, it was tough." Actually, the Clinton-Gore tax hike of 1993 slowed the economy to a 2.6 percent growth rate over the first three years of the administration. In 1994 Treasury bond rates ballooned from 5.75 percent to 8.25, making for the worst bond market in forty years. The dollar dropped to a lowly 80 yen, and 70 percent of the stocks listed on the New York Exchange dropped more than 20 percent. Economic confidence wasn't restored until the election of a Republican Congress, when interest rates began their long decline, the stock market rebounded, and the dollar rallied.



Al Gore by Roman Genn

Gore now defends a White House budget that contains 75 tax hikes adding up to $172 billion. These include seven increases on the death tax and $9 billion worth of higher airline-ticket taxes. Gore also wants to preserve the new FCC tax on phone companies. This is supposedly to wire public-school classrooms onto the Internet, but in fact the revenues merely finance general federal spending while the cost is passed along to consumers.

Gore wants to keep socking it to the Internet too. He led the administration's unsuccessful fight to block the bill establishing a three-year moratorium on Internet taxes, legislation whose passage sparked the phenomenal Internet stock-market rally last fall and made possible record electronic-commerce sales during the holiday season.

There are now 79 million adults who are regular Net users, and they are disposed to Republican-oriented attitudes and behavior. A recent *Wired* magazine poll shows that 56 percent of Internet users have "a lot of confidence" in the free-market system as opposed to just 34 percent of those not connected. Forty-four percent of regular Internet users are Republican and 30 percent are Democratic, while non-users are 38 percent Democratic and only 30 percent Republican.

The new Internet class also overlaps with the 125 million-strong investor class. Sixty-three percent of regular Internet users own stocks, bonds, and/or mutual funds. Ten and a half million investors now trade stocks and bonds and buy mutual funds online. All sorts of other business takes place online as well: Within 18 months, 50 percent of all retail trading by individuals will occur in cyberspace. Republicans absolutely must connect with the new group of web surfers/investors. They should support a permanent moratorium on new taxes for cyberspace access and sales, creating a wedge between this burgeoning constituency and the supposedly tech-friendly Gore.

Gore supports lower taxes only in the form of federally targeted tax credits for education and kids. He brags that, as a result, middle-class tax burdens have fallen. But this ignores the Social Security payroll tax burden: Seventy percent of wage earners pay more in payroll taxes than in income taxes. In fact, the combined payment for FICA and income taxes as a share of total wages and salaries has grown from 22.5 percent to 26.5 over the past four years.

This includes substantial tax-bracket creep, as successful workers have gone from the 15 percent tax bracket to the 28 percent threshold. It also includes this year's hike in wages subject to the Social Security tax from $68,000 to $72,000. Republicans should try to separate the over-taxed middle class from Gore by proposing to add families making between $25,000 and $72,000 to the 15 percent tax bracket and to eliminate the 28 percent bracket altogether.

What Gore offers the 21st century is essentially a re-run of the old Mondale/Dukakis fiscal liberalism. It was unpalatable the first time around and is likely to be more so in the cyber age. Gore may think he invented the Internet, but it certainly isn't a boon to his politics. **NR**

Mr. Kudlow, an NR contributing editor, is chief economist at American Skandia Life Assurance.

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The Anxious Class

The downside of mass investment.

JOHN DERBYSHIRE

OUR private lives have endured two revolutions this past 40 years: the sexual and the financial. Both have required ordinary citizens to become good at things that, in previous times, only a minority of experts, whose activities were regarded by the majority as morally somewhat questionable, were good at. Both have forced us to read books we would rather not have to read. Both have made fortunes for TV talking heads who can guide us through our new responsibilities—Dr. Ruth, Louis Rukeyser. Both have replaced simplicity with complexity.

Mr. Derbyshire is a contributing editor of NATIONAL REVIEW.

Our new freedoms have brought with them new anxieties, while banishing some older ones. In the financial-sphere, as in the sexual, our private relations with kith and kin have been invaded by troubling but irrepressible doubts and curiosities. Is his portfolio bigger than mine? we wonder. Or, when plowing through TurboTax on our home computer: Is that the response I was hoping for? Financial-performance anxiety is, I think, now a component of every middle-class American's consciousness. For our own fulfillment, for the strength of our marriages and the sake of our children, and to be in tune with our peers, we have to know things our grandparents did not have to know, and indeed considered it improper to know. We have to work at things they did not need to bother with, and even considered it wrong to bother with. My grandmother had 13 children; but she was adamant in insisting to my mother (number eleven) that "we never did it for pleasure."

I am sure she would have considered investing in the stock market to be a shady activity, engaged in by people with yellow vests who pushed their hats back on their heads and talked without taking the cigar out of their mouths. True, she was a poor woman, the wife of a coal miner; but such attitudes went all the way up the social scale. The great *rentier* bourgeoisie of the 19th century did not buy stocks, but bonds. "A millionaire has six hundred pounds a week," observes one of G. B. Shaw's characters—that is, an annual return of 3 per-

Small Company's New Golf Ball Flies Too Far; Could Obsolete Many Golf Courses.

Pro Hits 400-Yard Tee Shots During Test Round

Want To Shoot An Eagle or Two ?

By Charlie Allen

YALESVILLE, CT – A small golf company in Connecticut has created a powerful, new ball that flies like a U-2, putts with the steady roll of a cue ball and bites the green on approach shots like a dropped cat. But don't look for it on weekend TV. Long-hitting pros could make a joke out of some of golf's finest courses with it. One pro who tested the ball drove it 400 yards, reaching the green on all but the longest par-four's. Scientific tests by an independent lab using a hitting machine prove the ball outflies 15 major brands by up to 22 yards.

The ball's extraordinary distance comes partly from a revolutionary new dimple design that keeps the ball aloft longer. But there's also a secret change in the core that makes it rise faster off the clubhead. Another change reduces air drag. The result is a ball that gains altitude quickly, then sails like a glider. None of the changes is noticeable in the ball itself.

Despite this extraordinary performance, the company has a problem. A spokesman put it this way: "In golf you need endorsements and TV publicity. This is what gets you in the pro shops and stores where 95% of all golf products are sold. Unless the pros use your ball on TV, you're virtually locked out of these outlets. TV advertising is too expensive to buy on your own, at least for us.

"Now, you've seen how far this ball can fly. Can you imagine a pro using it on TV and eagle-ing par-four's? He would turn the course into a par-three, and real men don't play par-three's. This new fly-power forces us to sell it without relying on pros or pro-shops. One way is to sell it direct from our plant. That way we can keep the name printed on the ball a secret that only a buyer would know. There's more to golf than tournaments, you know."

The company guarantees a golfer a prompt refund if the new ball doesn't cut five to ten strokes off his or her average score. Simply return the balls–new or used–to the address below. "No one else would dare do that," boasted the company's director.

If you would like an eagle or two, here's your best chance yet. Write your name and address and "Code Name S" (the ball's R&D name) on a piece of paper and send it along with a check (or your credit card number and expiration date) to NGC Golf **(Dept. S-520)**,60 Church Street, Yalesville, CT 06492. Or phone 800-285-3900 anytime. No P.O. boxes. One dozen "S" balls cost $24.95, two to five dozen are only $22.00 each, six dozen are only $109.00. You save $40.70 ordering six. Shipping and handling is only $5.00 no matter how large your order. Specify white or Hi-Vision yellow.

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cent, the usual figure for government issues from Napoleon's war to the Kaiser's.

Vexing as these new anxieties may sometimes seem, it is as well to keep them in perspective. The sexual revolution, however questionable some of its outcomes, was not waged against nothing. It was waged against widespread ignorance, much cruelty, and untold quantities of silent pain and despair. Check out "vaginismus" in a medical encyclopedia—a complaint once common and untreatable, now rare. So with our financial anxieties. Worried about your retirement? Cast your eye back a hundred years, when Somerset Maugham, recently graduated from medical school, was working in a coroner's office in the East End of London. One of his chores was to examine and register the corpses of suicides fished out of the river Thames. A romantic young man, Maugham assumed that most of these unfortunates had killed themselves for unrequited love. He was surprised to find that this was in fact a very uncommon motive. Most had been driven to suicide by financial difficulties. The world of our grandfathers was procedurally much simpler than our own; but it was also very much harsher.

■

The infallibility of the stock markets as a long-term investment has now been thoroughly internalized by everyone.

■

In addition to new anxieties, both these recent revolutions have exposed us to some very difficult questions about freedom and responsibility. It has been odd, in the recent Washington scandals, to hear supporters of President Clinton raise the cry that sexual relations are an entirely private matter. Who still believes this? It was an inspiring slogan in the first flush of liberation, but surely we are wiser now. Anyone who is not should be sent away to do curve-matching exercises on the graphs for postwar illegitimacy rates, welfare dependency, crime, etc. Human sexuality has momentous consequences for society. One is mildly astonished to find oneself still obliged to write such a sentence. Sex is no more private now than it was when Dr. Johnson justified the double standard between men and women as concerned marital fidelity on the grounds that "a man does not bring bastards into the home."

Similarly, we are now all acutely conscious that our private decisions about what to do with our money have major economic consequences. Suppose, for example, that we all go out tomorrow and spend our savings on stocks. By the well-known law of supply and demand, that will greatly raise the price of stocks. But the price of a stock is supposed to bear some relation to the worth of the company that issued it. If our private investment decisions cause the prices of all stocks to increase 100 percent, without any change in the circumstances of the issuing companies, we have created a bubble, haven't we? And bubbles burst, don't they? There are some economists who think this is what has been happening in the U.S. this past seven years. And there are some who think otherwise: If stock sells at high prices, it is easier for companies to raise funds—funds that hire more workers, renew plants, extend advertising. . . . So the circumstances of the issuing companies actually do improve. I am not arguing one case or the other, only pointing out that ordinary middle-class folk now have to think about this stuff, which once bothered the heads of no one outside a few specialized trading firms and a couple of government offices.

The reason we have to think about it, of course, is that we are all in the market. Forty-five percent of American households owned shares at the middle of 1998, mostly via mutual funds. At the time of the 1987 "correction," the figure was 25 percent. At the peak of the 1920s boom—just before the crash of '29—it was 3 percent. We are all investors now. The reason for this great change is not hard to find. Beginning in the mid 1980s, two ideas began to penetrate the consciousness of ordinary Americans. The first was: Social Security isn't going to make it. The second: Stocks outperform every other investment over the long term. Do you remember your first interview with a financial advisor? Did he not have that big colored graph on his wall—they seemed to be everywhere in the late 1980s—showing the relative performance of stocks, bonds, and gold since 1860? See stocks run!

The infallibility of the stock markets as a long-term investment has now been thoroughly internalized by everyone. So has the notion that, if we boomers are to maintain ourselves in the manner to which we have become accustomed, we shall have to fend for ourselves in the last 30 years of our long lives. Social Security will not be there for us. It is economically improbable that it should be, unless our children and grandchildren are willing to hand over half their paychecks to fund our Sunbelt condos and artificial hips. Alas, it is also economically improbable that 18 percent return on mutual funds will continue for very much longer. In a series titled "Unthinkables" last December, *The Economist* pointed out that whether stocks are really the best long-term investment depends on what you mean by "long-term": "It was not until the late 1950s that the Dow Jones Industrial Average returned in real terms to the value it enjoyed immediately before the stock-market crash of 1929." That's 30 years—the entire length of a boomer's retirement.

Conservatives cannot but applaud when responsibility for people's lives and happiness shifts to the people themselves. Financial liberation, like sexual liberation, has improved our private lives immensely, at a very modest cost in anxiety and vexation. Yet the gods of conservatism must still be, must always be, the Gods of the Copybook Headings, waiting patiently outside the door to tell us that what goes up must come down, that high rewards come only from high risks, and that—to take a phrase from Wall Street lore—when the little guy comes in, it's time to get out. We little guys are all in now, and believe that the nature of the world has changed in our favor. Perhaps it has; but the Gods of the Copybook Headings will have the last word. **NR**

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Camp Plummy Boy
Wainscotting, Maine
August 12, 1958

Dear Mummy and Daddy:

I'm having a super super time. Thanks a million for sending me to Camp Plummy Boy!

We've been doing so much super super stuff!! Like walking carefully along the river bank!! Archery with soft cottony tips!! Enjoying local insect life without disturbing or harming it!!

Yesterday, one of the counselors, Emory, and I realized that if you could somehow reduce a set of machine instructions to a binary code—made up of ones and zeroes—you could create an "automatic brain." Isn't that just the end??

Well, I have to go now! It's bath night!!

Love and hugs and kisses,
Al

Blue Gumm Farm
Carthage, Tenn.
June 12, 1963

Oh, Papa:

This year's crop looks to be a bad one. The winds are hard and the skies look dry. Missy Beulah says that clouds won't bring no rain 'til August. Don't know how we'll make it, Papa. But somehow we will. Because we're the people, Papa. Everywhere you see a fella diggin' a ditch in the sun, I'll be there. Everywhere you see a fella bailin' hay in the hot sun, I'll be there. Everywhere you see a fella spreadin' tobacco leaves in the dryin' house, I'll be there.

I'm also doing my summer reading for St. Albans. Just finished Grapes of Wrath. Snore!

Your faithful son,
Albert

Eliot House
Harvard University
April 23, 1968

Dear Tipper:

Prepare yourself, sweetie. Erich Segal has written a book about us! He calls it "Tipper and Al" but I think I've convinced him to change the name to Love Story.

He's got you down to a tee, of course, and my mom and dad. He hasn't quite captured me, though. I die in the end, which is kind of sad, I guess.

"Hey, Erich," I said, "if it's supposed to be me, how come I die at the end?" And he said, "Well, Gore, you're going to Vietnam, right? You could die there, right?" And I just laughed at him, 'cause we all know I'm not going to THAT part of Vietnam.

Love and kisses,
Al

P.S.: I left some drawings in your room last week. I've almost mapped out an entire DNA strand. Don't let the maid throw them out.

Army Information Center
Intercontinental Hotel
Saigon, Vietnam
April 14, 1971

Dear Rusty:

The body bags keep coming and Charlie shows no sign of giving up. I'm here in "Hot 'Nam" with my buddies—the guys who know what death is.

Death is what we eat for breakfast around here, Rusty. Death and dirt and mud and the memory of home. We may be fighting Communism here, Rusty, but I'll tell you something you won't read in the New York Times. Our country may win the war, but lose its soul.

I've seen so much, old friend. Thank God my month is almost up. See you in two weeks!

Your pal, Al

P.S.: The mail is so slow. If only there were a way to convert the ARPANET communications network into a world-wide network of computer servers that send mail digitally, as "packets" . . .

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HELP!!!!

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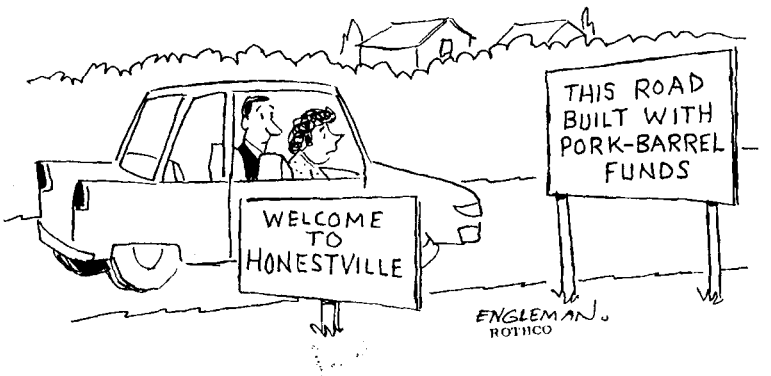

Matt—Rothco

"I don't fly anymore—it's the fear of finding myself sitting near some ghastly cabinet minister."

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Duel Loyalty

ORLANDO PATTERSON

Alexander Hamilton, American, by Richard Brookhiser (Free Press, 240 pp., $25)

WHILE it might be an exaggeration to call Alexander Hamilton America's "forgotten" founder, it is certainly true that he has been unfairly overshadowed by the monumental images of Jefferson, Washington, and even Madison. The reason could hardly be a lack of sources, since he wrote more voluminously than any other of the Founders and is the major author of the Federalist Papers. Nor could it be a want of interesting things to say about him, since the man not only led a perhaps too engrossing and varied life, but arguably did more than any of the other Founding Fathers except Washington to shape the future course of the nation: its political and legal systems, its commercial institutions, its tradition of public discourse, and its press. It is common knowledge that he has been badly served by scholars. Astonishingly, Forrest McDonald's biography was, until now, the only first-rate study in print, and though Hamilton's arresting image graces our ten-dollar bill, he has not become an icon. Why?

Richard Brookhiser's splendid biography comes closer than anything else to providing an answer and succeeds in doing what no other work has quite done before: provide a portrait of Hamilton that brings out the true genius of

Alexander Hamilton by Roman Genn

the man in a volume that is both elegantly written and accessible to a mass audience.

In just 240 pages, Brookhiser distills the major points in Hamilton's extraordinary life, from his precocious teenage years in St. Croix and youth in Manhattan, through his formative years as Washington's aide during the Revolutionary War, to his role in the writing of the Constitution and the Federalist Papers, to his later careers as secretary of the Treasury, lawyer, politician, and journalist. The work's primary objective, however, is the portrayal of Hamilton's character and achievement. Among the book's best chapters are thematic analyses of Hamilton's work as a journalist, his understanding of the rights of persons, and the passions that moved and eventually undid him.

Several recurring themes provide texture, depth, and coherence to the portrait: Hamilton's too-conservative distrust of the very voters whose approval he nonetheless sought; his too-radical faith in the possibilities of strong government; his "all-pervading ardor" and preoccupation with the darker side of passion; his pragmatic rationality; his energetic self-fashioning; and his distance from the ruling class into which he had entered through marriage and merit.

What emerges as the most important influence in Hamilton's life is his humble West Indian childhood. Not only was he illegitimate and abandoned by his father, but his mother was of questionable morals. Brookhiser discreetly puts the best interpretation on the available evidence about her. She was certainly not the whore her angry husband claimed in his divorce papers, but from what I know of 18th-century Caribbean Creole society, she was hardly the good woman of St. Croix.

This ignominious past weighed heavily on Hamilton and accounts for his best and worst qualities. His ambition, his enormous energy, his abhorrence of slavery, his compassion—all stemmed from what he learned growing up in a vicious little slave society and his need to overcome his personal past. Hamilton's immigrant status, and the fact that he hailed from "nowhere," largely accounts for his Federalist nationalism. More than any of the other Founding Fathers he could imagine a United States of America. Because he had no local ties (when Jefferson spoke of his "country," he meant Virginia) and because he despised and renounced his own foreign provenance, his one and only political loyalty was to America. Because the first place he knew was so ridiculously small, it was natural for him to become America's first "Continentalist," as he once signed himself. Hamilton's West Indian background may also explain his way with words—the enormous importance he placed on them, the ardor with which he used them. Something about the islands does this to its inhabitants, of every hue and ethnic group. It is no accident that several of the best poets in English, including Britain's likely next poet laureate, Derek Walcott, hail from these little islands, as do two of its best novelists: V. S. Naipaul and the late Jean Rhys, who could easily pass as a kinswoman of Hamilton. All acquired their

Mr. Patterson is a professor of sociology at Harvard University and the author most recently of *Rituals of Blood: Consequences of Slavery in Two American Centuries.*

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distinctive felicity with words at the breasts of their Creole-speaking mothers or nannies. All used words as their passports out of what they eventually came to see as insular and barbaric dead-ends. Hamilton was simply one of the earliest, and perhaps the greatest, to go this route; as Brookhiser acutely observes, "words were his means."

But this same past was also the source of his worst vices and the deeper reason for his untimely death. Like most West Indian men of all colors, then and now, especially those brought up by strong-willed mothers, he was a compulsive womanizer. He believed in marrying high and sleeping low, in part because of his contempt for and fear of sex, given what it had done to the most important woman in his life. Hamilton was fatefully drawn to women in distress. Brookhiser handles this vice adroitly, resisting all temptation to belabor the psychologically obvious. The absurd affair with Mrs. Maria Reynolds—America's first major political sex scandal—was driven by the "pride of a boy," the man-child of his fallen Creole mother, rather than the "pride of a man." Well said; and enough.

Hamilton's death in a duel, grasping the same pistol his son died with, seems like an honorable form of suicide.

It is Hamilton's Caribbean background too that explains his seeming indifference toward labor and the environment. One of his justifications for a federal tax was his belief that it would force idlers to work. It sounds callous, until one recalls that Hamilton had gone to work before he was twelve. The Caribbean was also the source of his "monarchial bias" and politically suicidal Anglophilia. Like most West Indians, especially those of predominantly British ancestry, he never got over the fact that Britain was the mother country, which meant for him, the mother political culture. He was a true American patriot who fought against George III, but he still meant it when he told a British envoy that "we think in English." He was right of course—in a narrower sense, we still do—but it was rash to broadcast the fact so soon after a war of independence with Britain.

In one of the book's most incisive passages, Brookhiser explains James Madison's shifting stances with the astute observation that he was, at heart, a weak man, unduly influenced by more powerful personalities. This was certainly not Hamilton's problem, but he too harbored a deep-seated spiritual malady. It was an ingrained sense of loss and abandonment; an inalienable void that came from his father's rejection and dishonoring. Hamilton's astonishing success could not remove it. Indeed, the greater his success and the more he moved in the company of men with honorable parentage, the more acute his sense of loss, his yearning to repair the dishonor, the sheer embarrassment of his soul. This "passion for honor," Brookhiser tells us, "that could be laudable or destructive, bulked large in Hamilton's life and times." It explains why he so badly advised his son about the duel in which the latter died. From this he never recovered. Hamilton's own death in a duel, grasping the same pistol his son died with, seems like an honorable form of suicide—a last, mortal *cri de cœur* for the one thing he could never achieve.

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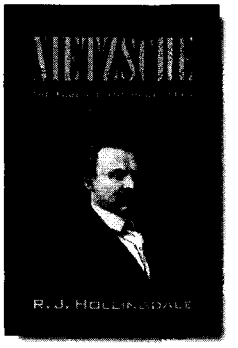

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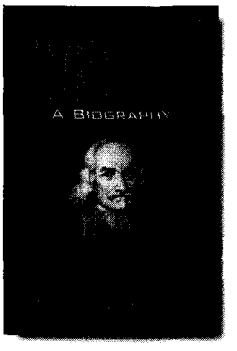

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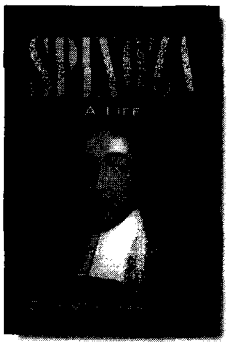

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I may have placed greater emphasis on Hamilton's West Indian background as the source of his complex and tragic personality than Brookhiser intended. But so vividly and engagingly has he drawn Hamilton that I feel free to interpret his lines and shadings as I will. This is biographical portraiture at its best, and it carries the form forward by drawing on and modernizing the form's greatest ancient practitioner. Plutarch pervades this book, partly because he was Hamilton's favorite author, but also because he clearly is Brookhiser's model. The work is Plutarchan in its brevity (compared with the grossly overwritten volumes typical of modern American biographies), in its emphasis on characterization over narrative, and in its frankly moral tone. So too is one of Brookhiser's most effective stylistic techniques: his delineation of aspects of his subject's character by contrasting him with conflicting personalities, what the classicist D. A. Russell calls the Plutarchan "internal *sunkrisis*," or comparison, as opposed to the extended comparisons appended to most of the *Lives*. Hardly a page passes without recourse to this method, and it works brilliantly for Brookhiser: His contrasts are always apt, and his judgments and reflections acute, often bracingly so.

The work's main fault springs from its chief virtue. The stylistic dictum "less is more" is sometimes taken too far, leaving the reader puzzled. For example, given what we are told about Hamilton's acrimonious political career in New York and his unhappy relationship with its voters, the expression of popular grief, shock, and outrage at his death comes as a complete surprise. Hamilton's complex relationship with his fellow New Yorkers clearly warrants more attention. And while his writing is generally taut and self-assured, Brookhiser is not immune to that literary virus of the modern American male writer: the sports metaphor. It simply does not work to compare Jefferson to a quarterback.

But these are minor flaws in a whole that is something of a triumph. The book succeeds wonderfully in reminding us that Alexander Hamilton was, next to Washington, the greatest of the Founding Fathers and that his life "can guide and caution us." **NR**

Risky Business

DAVID PRYCE-JONES

After the Collapse: Russia Seeks Its Place as a Great Power, by Dimitri K. Simes (Simon & Schuster, 288 pp., $25)

In the face of the Soviet Union, even intelligent and well-informed people in the West were liable to abandon reason and moral judgment. This must provide a fascinating subject for some future Edward Gibbon. Sovietologists were among those most willfully culpable of addling their own brains. A favorite procedure, closer to astrology than science, was to build a model purporting to show either that Communism was functioning well or that the Soviet Union was a society much like any other.

Dimitri Simes is one of the few entitled to credit for opposing apologetic Sovietologists with careful and moral argument. Born in the Soviet Union, he was to find an early niche in one of the most prestigious Moscow think tanks. In the Brezhnev era, Jews were allowed to leave the Soviet Union simply because they did not like it there, and Simes was among them. Inexplicably, the Communist elite for the first time had avoided murderous violence in its response to dissent. Once in the United States, Simes was able to write with authority about the political system that he knew at firsthand, its warmongering abroad and inhumanity at home. His prose is clear and jargon-free. A think-tank maestro, he became a foreign-policy advisor to President Nixon and today is president of the Nixon Center in Washington.

After the Collapse opens with an analysis of Gorbachev and the reforms which were to end the Cold War, Communism, and the Soviet empire, altogether a "historical cataclysm." He lends support to the mainstream view that Gorbachev actively dynamited central control and Party authority—the foundations of the system—in the wondrously mistaken belief that he was perfecting Communism. Although the doctrines of Marxism-Leninism would have justified it, he could not bring himself to resort to the murderous violence that alone might have extracted him from multiple and related crises of his own making. Thanks to that improbable psychological disposition in a Party leader, Communism was able to have a quick and painless death.

Boris Yeltsin is portrayed as a contradictory man of proven courage and folly.

The career and personality of Boris Yeltsin also shaped events definitively. What Gorbachev began, Yeltsin completed, but to very different purposes. Brilliantly exploiting every one of Gorbachev's self-made crises, he levered himself into supreme power with an ambition ferocious enough to destroy everything in his way. In a manner to which only a Shakespeare or Verdi could do justice, the rivalry between these two opponents brought crashing at their feet the regime that had given rise to them both.

During this dramatic period, Simes frequently visited Russia, sometimes with Nixon, and he had access to Gorbachev and Yeltsin, as well as their respective courtiers. President Reagan and then President Bush had continued to support Gorbachev long after this was rewarding or wise. Nixon at first argued for a wider assessment of the emerging Russia and its national interests, but he too concluded that the United States should take the new Russia at face value and help finance it.

Yeltsin, as portrayed by Simes, is larger than life, a contradictory man of proven courage and folly, enamored of himself but with no larger vision, a poor judge of others, a drunkard, comic but dangerous. At one meeting, he ex-

Mr. Pryce-Jones is the author of *The Strange Demise of the Soviet Empire* and *The Closed Circle: An Interpretation of the Arabs.*

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plained to Nixon that the latter's grandfather had lived in Russia in the same district as the Yeltsin family. The two of them might even have some kinship. Knowing that both his grandfathers had never left America, Nixon did not respond.

In power, Yeltsin has written a constitution with himself holding executive, legislative, and judicial supremacy. He openly rigged his own reelection as president. He did not have to order artillery to fire on the parliament building to prove what an empty shell it was. Dispatching troops to Chechnya, he wrecked the lives of the people he was purporting to save, incidentally flattening another parliament, this time regional. He rules by decree, signing thousands of them every year, put before him by fortune-hunting cronies to whom he turns a blind eye. Not really understanding privatization and the free market, he has fostered a clique of officials, bankers, and businessmen, privileged to steal the state's assets for themselves. Victims have no redress. As Simes says, there is no right or wrong in Russia today. He does not even raise the possibility of establishing a moral base by bringing to trial some of those responsible for Gulag. If mass murderers go free in society, why should anyone else feel bad about merely swindling the public?

For many years to come, Russia will be in the grip of post-Communist chaos. This brings Simes to his final point, which he expresses calmly and convincingly. America is in a unique position to press for the essential attributes of democracy, the rule of law, legal codes that can be respected, a just and workable tax system, accountability. Instead of doing so, President Clinton, Strobe Talbott, and others in the administration accept that Russia is a democracy simply because it says it is. Wrong and patronizing, this approach does active harm to American interests. Covering up for Yeltsin in defiance of truth, they become accomplices in the ruin of Russia. Much more of this, and Russians in general will accuse America of keeping them down and out deliberately. Unless some day soon there is an administration that relies on reason and moral judgment when it comes to things Russian, the great-power rivalry of the bad old days must revive with a vengeance. ■

Contact

ANDREW STUTTAFORD

Little Green Men, by Christopher Buckley (Random House, 300 pp., $24.95)

SPACE aliens are a nasty, bug-eyed lot, always plotting to subjugate the galaxy and firing off death rays. Not much use to us humans, you might think. But you would be wrong. As a plot device, the extraterrestrial can be most useful, a light shone on the peculiarities of this planet. And so, in his latest, and very funny, novel, Christopher Buckley employs a motley and distinctly home-grown bunch of ETs to take a look at a close encounter between two different worlds, both of which happen to be located here on Earth.

His hero, John Banion, is a king of the first of these worlds, Beltway Washington: a prince of pundits, a griller of presidents, his Sunday-morning show a D.C. must-see. And the Washington Buckley portrays with his customary collection of one-liners and insightful zingers is a venal, absurd place. He reproduces its portentous language with perfect pitch (an intern program—no, not that one—called "Excellence in Futurity") and its pretentious inhabitants with perfect bitch.

The city described here is salon Washington, the home of power politics at its most trivial, inhabited by a Renaissance Weekend of grotesques, including a widowed hostess who married a fortune and became an ambassador in Europe, and a "suave, immense, baritone-voiced" African-American, the president's "first friend." What of the president himself? He's an "ozone-hugger" who speaks in a "slow, overly patient tone of voice that suggested he wasn't sure English was your first language."

Which may be wise, for as John Banion is soon to discover, it's a different

Mr. Stuttaford is a writer living in New York.

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world out beyond the elite enclaves. In *The Bonfire of the Vanities*, Sherman McCoy arrived there by means of a wrong turn after the Triborough Bridge. For Christopher Buckley's soon-to-fall Master of the Universe, there's no wrong turn—in effect, somebody else grabs the wheel. The luckless pundit is abducted by *things*, subjected to unpleasant procedures, and then abandoned on a golf course, with a pain down below "that reminded him of how he'd felt after the colonoscopy, a feeling of stretching . . . "

It gets worse. A second abduction convinces Banion that the alien threat is real. He has to become the "Paul Revere of the Milky Way" and warn the world. The problem is that his world, the Washington world, doesn't want to know. He

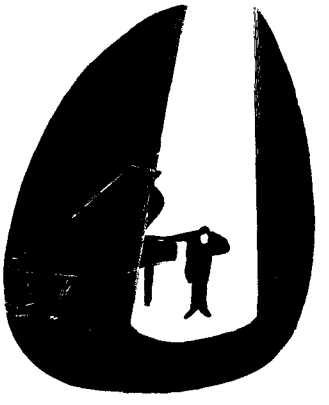
■

John Banion is just what the saucer crowd has been waiting for.

■

quickly becomes an embarrassment, an intergalactic Pierre Salinger. With wicked relish, Buckley shows us how Banion loses wife, contacts, and contracts. Cruel man that he is, the author even makes his Job-like hero go through the ordeal of an AA-style "intervention" by friends.

The inhabitants of another world altogether, Planet Ufology, however, prick up their (wish-they-could-be-pointed) ears when they hear Banion's message. The newsman is just what the saucer crowd has been waiting for. He's famous, possibly even sane, a plausible spokesman far closer to the mainstream than most in the UFO world, a world that Buckley has obviously researched with care. Its celebrities (with changed names: flying writs are more dangerous than flying saucers) are on parade. And so are its stories, speculations, and just plain hoaxes: Roswell, Area 51, Grays, Nordics, cattle mutilations, even that Richard Nixon/Jackie Gleason business (long story, but, as usual in these matters, it involves alien corpses). And



Banion? Well, he's no Sherman McCoy. He refuses to remain fallen but instead picks himself up and becomes a master of this new universe.

Yet even as he is lionized by the crowd at a (marvelously described) UFO conference, our protagonist can't help noting that "there was something lacking in these people's lives." The ultimate insider exchanges his Washington post for plebeian life in the USA today but . . . well, as Egalitarian of the Year he simply does not cut it. Nor does the author, who cheerfully resumes the political incorrectness displayed so enjoyably in his last novel, *Thank You for Smoking*. Potential offendees include Canada, dwarves, the space program, Eleanor Roosevelt, PBS, electric chairs, Cuban detainees, Indiana housewives, and Sammy Davis Jr.'s missing eye.

As we discover, the UFO nation is not a small one. In fact, you are living in it. Its credulous hordes are large enough to overwhelm John Banion's old Washington kingdom, and the rewards it offers, both financially and in terms of sheer adulation, are far greater. Like one of those Roman generals sent off to deal with the barbarians in the latter days of the empire, Banion is able to return to torment the capital at the head of a vast army of co-opted provincials, in his case a three-million strong "Millennium Man" march.

Then what happens? What can be disclosed without spoiling the plot (the author reveals this detail early on) is the book's underlying premise that the whole UFO business, including Banion's abduction, was a fraud from the very beginning, engineered by Majestic, the most secret of all government departments. Its purpose? Initially, to worry Stalin, but later to keep the U.S. taxpayer sufficiently "alarmed about the possibility of invasion from outer space . . . to vote yea for big weapons and space programs."

It's possible (think of the health-care "crisis" or global warming), but X-philes who read this book will find the idea a little farfetched, even for a satire. Conspiratorially, they will talk about the documents that purport to show that Majestic really did exist. Patiently, they will explain that the aim of this real Majestic was not to fabricate UFO evidence, but to conceal it. Darkly, they will tell you that, if these documents are genuine, Buckley's tale can only help to mislead a country that has already been misinformed for far too long.

And why would the author do this? For a clue, check out the career of his hero, the television pundit he puts in the firing line. That's also his father's job. Yes, his father, that same "W. F. Buckley" who was mentioned twice in Jim Marrs's *Alien Agenda*, last year's exposé of the UFO cover-up. Could Buckley the Son be part of the conspiracy?

I don't know, but next time you are in the Buckley neighborhood, watch out for those black helicopters. **NR**

What Works

J. BOTTUM

His Glassy Essence: An Autobiography of Charles Sanders Peirce, by Kenneth Laine Ketner (Vanderbilt, 416 pp., $39.95)

KENNETH LAINE KETNER offers here a new account of the 19th-century American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce. A professor at Texas Tech who's published eight philosophical studies—as well as a fascinating volume of correspondence about linguistics with the novelist Walker Percy—Ketner has a good imagination, an easy prose style, and as complete a knowledge of the history of American philosophy as anyone alive.

He made only one mistake in *His Glassy Essence*. But it came at the beginning, when he decided to write a fictionalized autobiography of Peirce instead of a biography. The result is a confusing and unhelpful mishmash, a disaster of a book. This is not the way

Mr. Bottum is Books & Arts editor of *The Weekly Standard*.

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to open up for a general audience the life of a philosopher's mind.

Ketner's failure is unfortunate, because we could use a good popular biography of Peirce. Critical opinion about the founders of the distinctly American philosophical school known as pragmatism has undergone a considerable shift over the last 30 years. Well into the 1960s, it was still widely assumed that America's premier philosopher was either Peirce's friend and successor, William James, or James's own successor, John Dewey. Today it is nearly universally agreed instead that Peirce is the pick of our great pragmatists.

This slight fading of James and Dewey owes something to the general exhaustion—in the late-20th-century philosophy departments of American universities—of the pragmatism that Peirce originated but James and Dewey developed to its classic expression. And the rise of Peirce owes something to his rediscovery not by Americans but by Europeans, who noticed that he had in some ways anticipated postmodern philosophy's "linguistic turn." But mostly the philosopher's promotion derives from a growing recognition of the simple truth: Peirce had the better mind. James was a far more enjoyable writer, and Dewey was far more influential. But Charles Sanders Peirce may be the only first-class philosopher we've ever had in America.

Ketner is certainly right to be fascinated by Peirce's life, for the man was something of an oddball. Born in 1839, the son of an astronomy professor who trained him from the cradle in logic and mathematics, Peirce attended Harvard from 1855 until he received his master's degree in 1862. But though he obtained various short-term college lectureships, he could never settle into an academic job, and from 1861 to 1891 his primary employment was as a piecework scientist and mathematician for the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey.

During these years, he poured out an extraordinary number of papers (the incomplete edition of his works runs to eight volumes), William James ceaselessly promoted him, and everyone seemed to enjoy what the mathematician T. S. Fiske described as "his dramatic manner, his reckless disregard of accuracy in what he termed 'unimportant details.' " But he never managed to catch either the public's imagination or the academic world's interest. Matched with an unpleasant wife detested by his family and friends, he lived the last years before his death in 1914 in obscure and sometimes sharp poverty.

Pragmatism, in the loosest sense of the word, is a general American philosophical attitude that Peirce shared with James, from whom it descended to John Dewey—and from Dewey down to Richard Rorty and innumerable other philosophy professors today. Deriving in part from the empiricism of David Hume and a fascination with the logic of scientific experimentation, pragmatism is concerned above all with the consequences of ideas—with the "pragmatic" results of holding a particular notion. It is not so much a philosophical theory as a metatheory, an attempt to judge among philosophical theories. James's favorite student, Giovanni Papini, defined it as "a collection of attitudes and methods" that takes a position of "armed neutrality in the midst of doctrines. It is like a corridor in a hotel, from which a hundred doors open into a hundred chambers."

In 1871, Peirce joined William James and future Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. in founding Boston's famous "Metaphysical Club." It was to be the birthplace of pragmatism—or so at least William James claimed in a widely reported 1898 lecture in which he described the philosophical school and

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credited with its paternity Peirce's brilliant 1878 essay, "How to Make Our Ideas Clear."

But Peirce insisted that his own philosophy was better described not as "pragmatism" but as "pragmaticism" (a word, he observed, "ugly enough to be safe from kidnappers"). And there is in fact a key difference between Peirce's ideas and James's.

James—interested in what he half-jokingly called "cash value"—argued that pragmatic results determine not only whether or not an idea is important but even whether or not it is true: "The whole function of philosophy," he wrote, "ought to be to find out what definite difference it will make to you and me, at definite instants of our life, if this world-formula or that world-formula be the true one."

This is, though James was reluctant to admit it, a step on the road to nominalism, which means the denial of truth apart from human use. Peirce was a much purer philosopher than James, concerned with more abstract philosophical issues and less interested in public persuasion. It was, for instance, Peirce's highly abstract work in "semiotics," the logic and symbols of language, that caught the interest of 20th-century European postmodernists. But—perhaps exactly because he was a purer philosopher—Peirce's work on language led him to embrace objective truth, not deny it. Dewey once claimed that the difference between them was that "Pierce wrote as a logician and James as a humanist." But in point of fact the logician Peirce proved a greater believer in objective reality than the humanist James. Pragmatic results, he argued, are merely what define an idea's content for human beings. The truth of that idea still depends on its conformity to the real world.

Attempting to show all this in *His Glassy Essence*—the first installment of a promised three-volume fictional autobiography of Peirce—Kenneth Laine Ketner smothers his story in layers of cryptic diary entries, yellowing letters, lost manuscripts, and long, day-by-day accounts of how the modern narrator uncovered the clues to his subject.

To explain why Peirce failed—to spell out why America embraced instead the half-blown nominalism of James and the full-blown nominalism of Dewey—would require a great intellectual biography: one of those almost impossible projects that brings into mutual illumination a thinker's life, ideas, and times. Ketner has all the credentials to produce that book. He just doesn't have the right idea of how to go about it. **NR**

■ CITY DESK ■

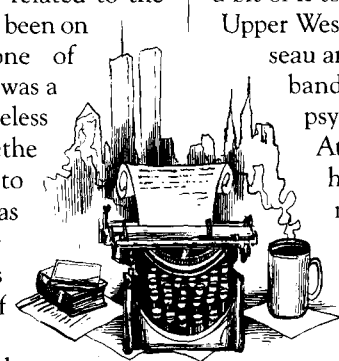
Old Town

RICHARD BROOKHISER

SINCE nostalgia is the companion of trendiness, New Yorkers have always shown an interest in the obscure and the quaint. It runs through city journalism all the way back to Washington Irving retrieving the customs of Dutch New Amsterdam (many of which he made up).

But truly old things can linger here with astonishing persistence, taking the same advantage of the city's anonymity and size that the weird and the *outré* do. Sir Walter Scott and Russell Kirk looked for survivors of lost times in highland glens. They also exist in urban canyons.

Renata and her sister Cecilia came to rest on a cliff-face of the Upper West Side. The two civilized sisters had an appropriately civilized view of the trees of Central Park, which looked in the fall, they said, like a Persian carpet. They were Jews from Ferrara, related to the Finzi-Continis. They had been on the left politically—one of Mussolini's early victims was a personal friend. Nevertheless Cecilia, who was a Goethe scholar, had managed to ride out the war in Italy as a government translator (one of her projects was the Italian edition of *Mein Kampf*).



What was interesting about them was not what they had done there but how they behaved here. I met them through my wife, whom Renata had taught how to give and score the Rorschach test. The delphic blots, once commonly used in psychological diagnoses, have now become a curiosity. When my wife, a young Ph.D., had her first meeting with Renata to learn their secrets, the older woman lost patience with American training. "How can I teach you?" she exclaimed. "You know nothing! Nothing!" My wife eventually learned enough, however, to be introduced by Renata as "my last and best student."

The sisters did not visit their intellectual severity only on colleagues and friends. An adored nephew of theirs was an American academic, who became the dean of an Ivy League school. We called with our congratulations the day his success was announced in the *New York Times*. Renata was bursting with pride. But she was also puzzled at her nephew's ease of ascent, since, as she said, he had done "no original research." Years later, when I came across George Santayana's infinitely condescending remark that Harvard was the toy Athens of America, while Yale was the toy Sparta, I felt that I had visited the height from which it was delivered.

They were short and slight even by New York standards, like a pair of very intelligent sparrows. Cecilia's great consolation, as she aged, was reciting Dante from memory.

LILLY, another émigrée friend of my wife's, was an aristocrat of sensibility. She came from Vienna, and brought a bit of it to her apartment (also on the Upper West Side), including her trousseau and memories of her late husband, Emil. Emil had been a psychoanalyst—hers, in fact. At the end of their last session, he had asked, "And when may I see you?" Strictly speaking this was unorthodox behavior, though the Viennese were used to requests from those in power positions. When Emil was invited to join an amateur string quartet composed of senior shrinks, they had told him, "You will learn the viola" (he was a violinist, but they already had two). So he did.

Lilly's instrument was the piano, a baby grand sitting among her armoires

Mr. Brookhiser, an NR senior editor, is author most recently of *Alexander Hamilton, American.*

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and her Bohemian glassware. With her accompanying me, I hacked through Schubert's song about the Erlking. She had heard far better performances than that, though perhaps none (except the originals in Schubert's head) could ever have matched her willingness to be moved. She once told us after some concert that it had been "too beautiful to bear." Another, she reported, was "as beautiful as psychoanalysis" (as beautiful as hers, perhaps).

She last received me in a hospital bed. I bid her farewell by saying (because she had once told me that Viennese say it)

■

Other Americans think of New York as Sodom; to the survivors it must have looked like corn and apple pie.

■

"*Küss die Hand*"—I kiss your hand. She graciously corrected my pronunciation, supplying the umlaut I had omitted.

Lilly was not much larger than Renata and Cecilia. My wife is of diminutive Russian stock, but next to her Old World friends she looked like Mrs. Paul Bunyan. I looked like Babe the Blue Ox. When Jefferson was in Paris, he challenged the French naturalist Buffon over his belief that creatures and people degenerated in North America. Jefferson, 6'2", won the argument by rising from his seat at the dinner table. My survivor friends lost it again 200 years later.

They made up for their stature, however, with a texture of thought and appreciation that Americans usually lack. Even the New York intellectuals, so many of them descendants of immigrants, looked a little brash and barkerish next to them. Other Americans think of New York as Sodom; to the survivors it must have looked like corn and apple pie. Of course, their native culture had a dark side of evil and perversion far worse than anything here (I hadn't had to emigrate to Vienna or Ferrara). But I am glad that, when the tapestry was torn apart, they managed to find their ways to New York, which kept them, like a benign indifferent museum, alive and unusual long after their worlds had vanished. **NR**

■ FILM ■

New Angle on Angels

JOHN SIMON

THE surest way of testing a movie's greatness is seeing it a second time. If it is just as good, it is a good film. If it gets better in the fineness and fullness of its detail, it is great. That is the case of Erick Zonca's *The Dreamlife of Angels*. Though riveting, it is no mere entertainment, but a necessary work of art.

Two working-class French girls, Isa and Marie, meet in a sweatshop working sewing machines. They couldn't be more different. Isa is an optimist, cheerful under the most trying circumstances. She wanders from town to town with a backpack, only to discover in bleak, chilly Lille that the fellow she hoped to crash with has moved on without leaving a forwarding address. Undiscouraged, she raises some money by cutting pictures out of magazines, mounting them on colored cardboard, and selling them for a supposed charity on the streets. And she takes odd jobs.

Marie is a sullen, unforthcoming creature who has left home because she cannot stand her father. She does her work, but comes alive only at night, though with little money to have much of a nightlife. She is house-sitting a nice, big apartment for a mother and daughter whom a car accident has left comatose in the hospital. She doesn't know much about them, and doesn't care to. But, grudgingly, she lets Isa share the apartment.

At first, the girls hit it off: Their very differences prove stimulating. They go pub-crawling and, penniless, decide to crash a disco. But the two bouncers, Frédo and Charly, won't let them in. A jeering altercation arises. Later that night, at a café, the bouncers plant themselves in two empty chairs at the girls' table, and a kind of friendship develops. Marie ends up lovelessly sleeping with Frédo, Isa remains platonic with Charly; both accept money from the

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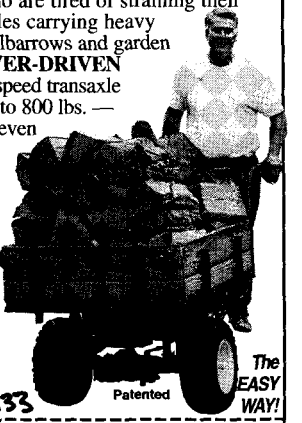

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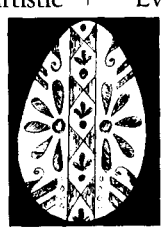
boys. Isa finds a job as a sandwich-board-girl on roller-skates, from which Marie abstains. She, however, tries to shoplift an expensive leather jacket, and is caught. Chriss, a young man the girls wished to pick up earlier, and whose headlight Marie kicked in when he refused to give them a ride, happens to be nearby; he pays for the jacket. But now Marie refuses to take it, and won't even let him kiss her.

Spoiled rich kid that Chriss is—he owns both that disco and the brasserie across the square—he is fascinated by a girl who resists him and determines to win her. He does so by treating her like a whore, taking her to a hotel and making rough love to her. Meanwhile Isa has discovered the diary of Sandrine, the comatose girl whose room she inhabits, and starts reading it. Charmed by its freshness, Isa seeks out Sandrine at the hospital. Although her mother has died, the girl still has a slight chance of recovery. Isa is drawn to her and is encouraged by the doctor and nurse to stay and talk to the unresponding patient.

As shattered as the dreamlife of these angels becomes, so shudderingly vivid is our participation in it.

That is only the beginning of the story, and, reduced to such an outline, it may not seem like much. But what the screenplay by Zonca and Roger Bohbot, and Zonca's direction, with the artistic collaboration of Virginie Wagon, do for it is irresistible. The language, in French (and even, largely, in the English subtitles), is a distillation of the zippy, slangy bravura of the urban young, yet at times obliquely affecting. Characters come alive with all their contradictions—surprises and predictabilities— and we become absorbed trying to read the thoughts off their manifestly toiling faces that nevertheless remain opaque. So much of this wonderful film is in suggestion, ambiguity, indirection: half-said or unsaid things—paradoxical behavior that yet makes a painful sort of sense.



Unlike in American films, where hack composers provide rampaging scores that tautologically hammer in obvious points—or, worse yet, blurt out that big moments are ahead—there is no score here—only music heard by the characters and one simple, effective song at the end. But we do get the most extraordinary—which is to say ordinary, but slightly amplified—everyday sounds: street noises, a train, birdsong, a dog barking, hammering, etc. At odd moments, bells are heard outside, or someone practicing scales next door. Objects—kitchen utensils, squeaky doors, hospital apparatus—join in the usually ignored symphony, the music of living.

And the director, combining with Agnès Godard's splendidly unobtrusive yet infinitely evocative cinematography, creates images that warm or chill, glow or threaten. Even the looks of various doorknobs tell part of the story. When Isa, at bedside, takes the comatose Sandrine's hand, the contrast between that pale, lifeless extremity and Isa's bitten nails with their sanguine but cracked polish speaks paragraphs. The closeups of Isa reading Sandrine's diary—its bouncy handwriting, the way the words race across the page, the suspense when a page must be turned in mid-sentence—are a dramatic event. Even more stunningly, we watch, again in extreme closeup, Isa making diary entries for Sandrine: the way she holds her pencil, how it moves sassily forward, the unexpected words coaxed into being, as well as the touching erasures. This is character in action, soul in self-revelation.

Every detail contributes, even the unruly shoulder straps of Isa's undershirt as they protrude from her boatnecked sweater. Or when Marie, smoking in bed, lets her cigarette briefly nudge the fringe of a curtain—playing with fire. Or the daring way Zonca holds the camera on a character for what seems an unconscionably long time, but that always pays off emotionally. And the final tracking shot should make history.

And the acting! Elodie Bouchez, as Isa, has a tomboyish haircut, ever-hopeful smile, sudden submersions in affliction. Her springy manner, disarming spontaneity, growing concern for and subsequent disconcertment with Marie, add up to a performance the like of which we haven't seen since the heyday of Giulietta Masina in Fellini's masterpieces.

Yet scarcely less astonishing is the Marie of Natacha Régnier, who infuses a basically unlikable person with pathos and despair, without, however, playing on our sympathy. Superficial and ungenerous as the character is, her tragic obsession is made to shine forth in terrible splendor. Both young actresses have unexceptional looks, yet transcend into searing beauty at crucial instants. Still, they remain natural, unaffected, real. As shattered as the dreamlife of these angels becomes, so shudderingly vivid is our participation in it. As the callow Chriss, Grégoire Colin is smoothly perfect; despite his abuse of her, you can see what rivets Marie to him. And the two bouncers, seemingly simple and alike, are yet discretely individuated by their telling portrayers.

Since writing these lines, I have seen *The Dreamlife of Angels* a third time, and, believe me, it is still growing. This is, after three short subjects, the first feature by Zonca, a man in his early 40s who discovered European films at the Bleecker Street Cinema while living in New York. I am told that his next film, the made-for-TV *Un petit Garçon*, is even better. I can hardly wait. **NR**

■ FILM II ■

Paying for Beauty

JEFFREY HART

No doubt about it: In the year and a half since the release of James Cameron's *Titanic*, it's become clear that the film will go down in cultural history as a major event. It is a movie flawed in some respects, like *Birth of a Nation* and *Gone with the Wind*, but also like them permanently evocative of its moment. In the wake of *Titanic*, so to speak, I have been discussing the movie on university campuses. Everyone wants to talk about it, and fortunately *Titanic* is good

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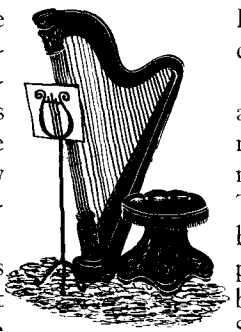
enough to bear much discussion. In the course of these conversations an intriguing tension in Cameron's vision has emerged.

Cameron did his homework on history. At the same time, he omits a great deal which would have made his film more powerful. For instance, in his depiction, the ship's decor and architecture are splendid, as they were in reality. But this leaves unexplained why the *Titanic* was constructed this way—as, in Cameron's phrase, "the ship of dreams."

Well, the White Star Line faced a problem. The great German transatlantic liners, with the latest engines, could on the basis of speed be equaled but not defeated. White Star thus decided to beat them on commodiousness and beauty. No expense was spared. A piece of the grand staircase on display in the museum at Halifax has been compared by experts to the carving of the 17th-century master Grinling Gibbons. The second-class accommodations on the *Titanic* were superior to the first class on the German ships. Had a ship less grand than the *Titanic* sunk in those North Atlantic waters on April 14–15, there would have been no story—at least no story of equal power—to tell.

But this oversight is hardly worth mentioning when set alongside another. After all, Cameron's interests lie elsewhere than in the history of shipbuilding. One focus of the film is social class, and here his treatment is seriously problematic.

In short, he omits entirely the often noble behavior of the people in first class. His chief villain, Cal Hockley, scowls at the center of the movie's social-class scheme. He is the son of a Pittsburgh steel magnate and engaged to our heroine, Rose. Of all the first-class passengers, he is the only male we see much of and may fairly be taken as the movie's representative of that class.



Yet he is so purely villainous as to challenge credibility. Against the strict code of his class, he hits, actually hits, Rose. He breaks crockery. He has a permanent 5 o'clock shadow. He tries to bribe his way into a lifeboat. He even has a sadistic bodyguard, an ex-cop. Thus the dark capitalists control the thug-like forces of order.

Yet Cameron—who, as I say, did his homework—knows that there were many true gentlemen in first and second class who indeed, according to their code of behavior, "did the right thing." For example, we see in a cameo shot Isidor Strauss and his wife. They are lying together on a bed in their stateroom, waiting for death. Cameron knows that their real story is more complicated and much more poignant.

Isidor Strauss created the great department store Macy's. In his late 60s, rich and retired, he toured Europe with his wife. They were now heading home on the *Titanic*. As the ship sank, Mrs. Strauss was allowed to board a lifeboat. She pleaded that her elderly husband be allowed to board too. This was allowed. But Mr. Strauss refused to board. He said, "I will not go before the other men." That was that. She said that she had spent her life with him and would not leave him now. She stepped out of the boat, and they sat on deck chairs to watch others load.

■

To be free of class is the ideal projected by James Cameron. Yet in such a world there could have been no *Titanic*.

■

The point here is that the upper-class gentleman's code of that era was deeply felt and sternly enforced. It involved "setting an example" for the rest of society. When things went wrong, one bore it with stoicism, or irony, or humor. Perhaps above all, one was deferential to women.

Col. John Jacob Astor, whose ancestors first earned their money in fur trading, also makes a cameo appearance in *Titanic*. He was traveling with his second wife, young and pregnant. She pleaded that he be let into a lifeboat with her. Second Officer Lightoller refused: "Women only." Without complaint, Astor withdrew. Apparently while swimming in the ocean he was crushed by tons of steel as one of the

(Continued on page 73)

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HART

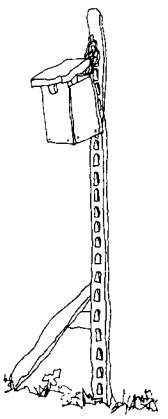
(Continued from page 71)

funnels tilted and crashed. Benjamin Guggenheim, of the great steel fortune, met a similar fate and asked a departing passenger to tell his wife he had died "like a gentleman."

It is possible that Cameron intuited that a modern audience would scarcely believe that any such code of honor existed. Yet I think he never considered for a moment trying for genuine complexity here, because he had a very different, more up-to-date ideal in mind: that of Jack Dawson.

Jack, beloved of Rose, appears to be classless, a westerner from Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin. Though in a borrowed tuxedo he can "almost pass for a gentleman" (Cal Hockley's words), he can fully assimilate to the seemingly happy and spontaneous immigrants in steerage, dancing and cavorting with the most energetic of them. He is also an artist, or at least a talented sketcher, and he has been to . . . Paris! Jack represents freedom, unfettered by the contingency of the material world.

Which brings us to the unresolved tension in *Titanic*. Although Rose with her arms spread on the ship's bow is the emotional high point of the movie, surely Rose and Jack know they cannot sustain that experience of non-contingent freedom for much more than a moment. How would Jack earn a living if they got to New York? Where would they live? And as we learn later, Rose is pregnant. If they both survived, the prison house of contingency would cut off the oxygen of their freedom. To remain classless and free, Jack Dawson must die.



To be free of class, free of the constraints imposed by living in a world where one must earn money to survive, is the ideal projected by Cameron's imagination. Yet in such a world (if it can be imagined)—without money, without wealth and its associated gradations called "class"—there could have been no *Titanic*.

My campus audiences, unlike James Cameron, come to grips with this reality. What they love about the movie is its beauty and the pathos of the death of that beauty, the closing hole in the ocean. And that is one thing that drew Cameron himself, an aesthete, to the *Titanic*. Such beauty—the ship, its great architecture—is produced, at least in democracies, by surplus wealth. More specifically, surplus private wealth. Cameron must realize that government is good at building highways, post offices, and submarines—but not luxury ocean liners. Nor movies about doomed luxury ocean liners. The National Endowment for the Arts could not have put up the $200 million it took to produce this gorgeous movie.

Cameron will have to live with that contradiction, or perhaps, as an artist, die with it unresolved. **NR**

■ BOOKS IN BRIEF ■

Appointment in Rome: The Church in America Awakening, by Richard John Neuhaus (Herder & Herder, 170 pp., $24.95)

To the Pope's Synod for America, held in Rome in late 1997, went Fr. Neuhaus. What's coming for the Church in the Western Hemisphere was the topic John Paul II wanted the assembled prelates and scholars to consider. They considered it with much wringing of hands, but occasionally, reports Neuhaus, with the scent of springtime in their nostrils; the sense that tremendous, spirit-directed opportunity lies ahead.

Appointment in Rome is very Neuhausian: that is to say, droll, opinionated, self-referential, informative, and acute; a book not just for Catholics. Neuhaus would have liked, on the part of the Church's "senior management," less hand-wringing and more enthusiasm for religious pluralism and ecumenical engagement with Latin America's sheep-stealing Protestants. Yet springtime cheerfulness breaks in frequently. Among the bishops there is deep concern for holiness. Most of all there is the Pope, nudging his vast and varied flock into the millennium—"sowing seed for the future," a cardinal tells the author, who understands well enough that springtime is when seeds bear fruit. —William Murchison

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WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.

Moral Equivalency On Clinton?

NEW YORK, MARCH 5

THE moral-equivalency types have been at it. The thesis, this time around, is that the enemies of Bill Clinton and the friends of Bill Clinton are equally guilty. William Saletan of the *Slate* editorial board put it starkly in that journal's spiky bulletin, "The Week/The Spin." Quoth Mr. Saletan, "Clinton's enemies, like his apologists, care more about politics than about truth."

Meanwhile Michael Isikoff of *Newsweek* has published his book, *Uncovering Clinton: A Reporter's Story*. The headline given to the excerpts in *Newsweek* reads, "Michael Isikoff details how a loose band of Clinton enemies helped Paula Jones—and brought Monica to Starr's attention."

What does it require in order to be listed as a Clinton "enemy"? The story told by Mr. Isikoff reads—after drastic compression—as follows:

A agrees to file a complaint by Paula Jones against the president. The help of *B* is solicited because this is the first time ever a civil complaint has been dangled at a sitting president. *B* solicits the help of C and *D*, who are interested in the case because it is very big time. *D* is a Democrat. And before you know it, the Supreme Court has agreed by 9–0 that a sitting president is not immune from a civil lawsuit.

So far there isn't much of a right-wing conspiracy manifest here. The Supreme Court is not made up of nine members of the Federalist Society. What then happens is that Linda Tripp moves onto the scene—she has some hot material, tapes from a lady who claims to have had sex ten times with the same man Paula Jones has implicated in the same kind of thing. B wants to get some general advice on the publishability of such a story and consults with *E*, who was himself an attorney but is now a book publisher, who inherited his father's conservative-oriented house.

E says it is pretty heady stuff and recommends consultation with F, an academic type who says it should be investigated whether the Lewinsky material should be given to the Paula Jones people; but if so, precautions should be taken to make sure the itinerary is squeaky-clean. To which end *F* makes contact with G, who once worked for Kenneth Starr and who establishes that, yes, Mr. Starr thinks the tapes relevant, but they must come in through the front door. G, who is consulted, presides over the transfer of the tapes and their verification: ending in modern history as begun on Jan. 17, 1998.

Now is this convincingly conspiratorial activity by Mr. Clinton's "enemies"? If that is true, then you have to say any lawyer who believes that a woman sexually harassed has the right to sue the alleged harasser even if he is a president of the United States, is an enemy of Mr. Clinton. The *Slate* editor goes on, "Mr. Clinton's apologists have dismissed every charge against him as the product of a right-wing propaganda machine, and his enemies have done everything possible to prove that theory right."

The reason for all this commotion, of course, is Juanita Broaddrick.

Now to accept the proposition that right-wing propaganda and right-wing motivation are uniquely responsible for all that has gone on is the exact logical equivalent of saying a concern over the use of the Oval Office for sex with an intern, followed by perjury on wide-screen TV and obstruction of justice, is exclusive to the right wing.

If it is true the majority of Americans are indifferent to the fate of Mrs. Broaddrick, then one asks two questions, hoping earnestly that the correct answer is the honorable answer: (1) Are the American people indifferent to Mrs. Broaddrick because they are indifferent to alleged rape, or (2) because they simply despair that corrective action is something that is likely to happen in modern America?

I have some spiritual concern for right-wing conspiracy talk. If a vast right-wing conspiracy is responsible for the dislocations of the last year, then I guess I'd have to confess to being a part of it. Indeed, it would be asserted by historians, I suppose, that I have a proprietary interest in right-wing conspiracies. I can't think of one thing said by or believed in by Henry Hyde that I differ with, including a pretty lively interest in the truth. Who says we care less for the truth than for politics? What untruth did Mr. Hyde invent, or defend?

Years ago, talking back to the moral-equivalency people who were saying the United States and the Soviet Union were equally guilty of promoting the Cold War, I replied that a man who pushes an old lady out of the way of an oncoming bus should not be likened to a man who pushes an old lady into the way of an oncoming bus on the grounds that both men are pushing old ladies around.

Who's Afraid of DNA?

NEW YORK, MARCH 2

JUST because Janet Reno serves as a full-time defense attorney for Bill Clinton doesn't mean that any proposal coming from her desk is to be ignored or condemned. But this time, in encouraging a Justice Department commission to explore a wider use of DNA fingerprinting, she is running into ideological opposition. The ACLU and some libertarians take the position that to collect evidence from uninvolved citizens is to violate the Fourth Amendment's guarantees against unreasonable search and seizure.

First, is it doable? We are slowly finding out. We do know that DNA evidence has proved critical in critical cases. For reasons that have to do not with the reliability of DNA but with the hypnotic powers of skilled advocates and dumbstruck jurors, O. J. Simpson got off. To accomplish that, his lawyers had to prove everything other than that he was related to Thomas Jefferson. People tend to use round numbers, and the jury was persuaded that inasmuch as one out of every 22 million people could have the same DNA meant that O.J. must not be sent up for a crime that might have been committed by a newborn child in the Himalayas.

But the moment of arrival for DNA came with Lewinsky. The semen-stained dress will go down in legend as the equivalent of the apple that dropped on the head of Isaac Newton, introducing gravity. So . . . we have the best forensic tool since the identification of fingerprints. Can we use it?

The study group in Dallas is called the National Commission on the Future of DNA Evidence. It is made up of judges, defense lawyers, police, prosecutors, and

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scientists. Miss Reno wants the commission to examine proposals in New York and in North Carolina and a new law in Louisiana to make DNA collections more and more comprehensive.

At the moment, 50 states authorize the taking of DNA specimens from persons who are convicted of rape or other violent crimes. Derivative question: John Doe is arrested on a rape charge. It is established that he is not guilty. What happens to the DNA record? Is it kept around? Is it destroyed?

Should it depend on what John Doe wants?

State senator Tony Rand of the North Carolina legislature, who is sponsoring a DNA bill, asks, What is the difference between DNA and fingerprints, which are universally accepted as okay as a loose form of identification, required as they have been for passports, driver's licenses (in some states), and Army records? Fingerprints are pretty well lodged as admissible in Western culture, but what about IDs?

Being made to carry a slip of paper with a number that positively identifies who you are got a very bad reputation from totalitarian sponsors in Germany, Russia, and South Africa. But to the observation that bad people also like IDs, one can only answer with the Roman maxim, *Quod licet Jovi, non licet bovi*—What is okay for the gods to do is not okay for the swine to do.

The individualization of the human race is the key to liberty, to privacy, and to uniqueness. The human race has a whole lot of things in common, but there is only one O.J. The notion that we should be presumptively suspicious of the collection of identifying photographs or credit cards or Social Security numbers doesn't argue for privacy but rather for amalgamation. If John Doe, 34 933 643, is the only such John Doe anywhere, this shouldn't suggest that our knowledge of him is an invasion of his privacy. Rather, it is an acknowledgment of his individuality.

As a practical matter, DNA has a long way to go, but we are headed in the right direction. Something called a 310 Genetic Analyzer will permit investigators to learn in three days, as contrasted with the three to six months it now almost everywhere takes, whether the suspect has the DNA that either exonerates him or incriminates him. A company in Stamford, Conn., called Lifecodes, with 170 employees, is hard at work trying to expedite the whole operation. The notion that to further the work of that science is threatening is to confuse crime with the detection of crime. We are positively safer when the criminal is detected, and it is paradoxical to suppose that to expedite that identification is to attenuate one's own privacy.

Clearly the collection of DNA evidence has to proceed with conventional regard for procedure. Already that's the case in respect of other identifying data. If you don't want a number around your neck, don't apply for a passport. On the other hand, you are required to apply for Social Security. It would be healthy if everyone were asked to give out his/her DNA, and the day is far off when it is required, but if that day comes, why should we be alarmed?

Is Capitalism Limp?

NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 29

PEOPLE who stay on their toes waiting eagerly for capitalism to fail are greatly buoyed by the new book by Edward Luttwak, *Turbo-Capitalism: Winners and Losers in the Global Economy*. His name cheers reluctant readers of economic and political analysis because he is a bright gentleman with keen insights. Years ago he clarified matters by telling us that in Soviet Russia, everything was permitted, except such activity as was banned. In China, nothing was permitted, except such activity as earned an exemption. Dr. Luttwak is now telling us that the current form of capitalism is called Turbo-Capitalism, and that what has happened is that capitalism has forsaken the kind of orderly upward mobility which over recent centuries won for it the sullen approval of the ethical community.

If under capitalism 100 million people all rise, as with the tide, then everyone on board any one of capitalism's boats can cheer the secular movement toward universal economic progress. Aha! This is no longer happening, Dr. Luttwak says, because the grand propellants of modern capitalism don't leave the kind of wake left by the development of a car engine or the generation of electricity. Instead we have the computer. And (I am citing Dr. Luttwak) it does not do for the many what it does for the few. The result is the isolation of a larger and larger class which does not rise with the tide.

A current criticism of the GOP tax proposals that would give everyone a 10 percent reduction in tax bills is criticized in the same spirit. Why these people need to remind us, week after week, month after month, decade after decade, that a 10 percent reduction would mean $300,000 more for Bill Gates and zero more money for the mother of two is hard to understand. That the rich are rich seems to me not in need of reiteration, any more than one would feel it useful to say that a reader, after all, knows the alphabet. The point in a universal reduction of taxes is first to lower disproportionate burdens. If Mr. Gates is paying 50 percent of his earnings to the government the question isn't: Isn't that a nice, jolly figure for somebody that rich? The question is: Do we really believe that a just society should penalize a citizen by as much as 50 percent of what he earns?

Dr. Luttwak has a nice metaphor for it all. The rich are industrious (those of them who are) because they feel the Calvinist drive. The not-rich accept their relative penury because they understand the Calvinist drive of mortification and sacrifice. The not-rich who look at the whole scene and just seethe, are revolutionaries, faux revolutionaries, revolutionaries manqués, or inchoate revolutionaries.

The best thing to do is slow down, because capitalism has unexpected and ingenious ways of spreading the wealth. Dr. Luttwak's "deprived, $25,000-per-year mother" is the beneficiary of computer technology from the moment she rises to the moment she returns to sleep, a sleep whose untroubled state may be owing to medical discoveries made possible by?—computer technology.

About this there is general agreement, namely that the value of an education, in economic terms, is greater than ever. Thirty years ago a college education meant a 40 percent increase in average earnings. Now that is 70 percent. Well, how does capitalism handle that problem? A higher percentage of people go to college today than in 1950. The strain comes only when you bump into ineducability. If the special skills required to move around in cyberworld aren't acquirable, then there is relative lack of progress. What do we do about that? We struggle to find other means of increasing productivity. There is an engine that is working on this all the time, because engines are fired by the need to reduce cost and to increase production.

"They"—the true believers—are asking more and more often, What in the name of heaven does the Republican party think distinguishes it from other political parties? What does distinguish the party, or should, is a metaphysical regard for property and a general belief that discriminatory taxation is a violation of a basic civil right, even if the Sixteenth Amendment kicked its way into being, athwart the most basic moral perception, that one does not treat John differently from James just because John earns more money.

Turbo-Capitalism can fire away on its sooty engines, but the basic picture is not changed.

—UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

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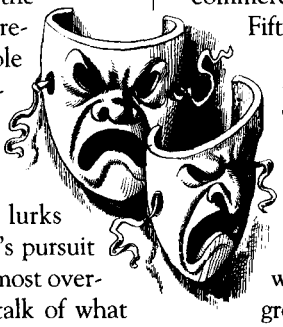
■ THE MISANTHROPE'S CORNER ■

FLORENCE KING

AMERICA has a time problem. I don't mean our obsessive need to "save" time that foreigners have long joked about. We aren't like that anymore; the American in a hurry has slowed to a crawl and now uses what little Yankee ingenuity he has left to figure out how to get more "leisure" time to spend with his family.

Now that we are no longer speed demons or efficiency freaks, we might reasonably be expected to develop the richer, fuller attitudes toward time that we profess to admire, but the opposite has happened. We are still in a time warp, only this one is even worse than the one we shed. Now it's not merely clock time but our whole concept of time—past, present, and future and their links to each other—that has been shot to hell.



Chronological eeriness lurks everywhere. Mark McGwire's pursuit of Babe Ruth's record was almost overshadowed at one point by talk of what pitcher would become "immortal" by giving up the big one. Masochistic debates about enduring a lifetime of pity to get to the good part tend to spring up when a nation's population is in the habit of spending much of its day hitting Rewind and Fast Forward buttons. For the time-warped it's a matter of personal preference, and Reds pitcher Brett Tomko is a Fast Forward man. "If it's hit off me," he said, "I'd be on every highlight film for the rest of my life. I'd be part of history."

Another Fast Forward favorite is the expression "lame duck." It used to refer to a defeated incumbent during the period between his loss of an election and the inauguration of the victor. Now it means a President entering his second term. The moment he wins re-election, a feat once once regarded as an ultimate triumph, he's called a lame duck.

To see the Rewind set in action, turn to any Op-Ed page and you will find that of the five syndicated columnists featured, four will attempt to make their points by quoting Yogi Berra's "It's deja vu all over again," while the fifth, more literate than the rest, quotes Faulkner: "The past isn't dead, it isn't even past."

The past may not be dead but we do our best to kill it while simultaneously wallowing in nostalgia. During the late unpleasantness a parade of White House flacks went from talk show to talk show comparing Ken Starr's investigation to the puritanical, sexually repressed, hypocritical, hysterical, paranoid, Commie-hunting days of McCarthyism, only to be interrupted by pictures of drive-ins and T-Birds and Dean Martin singing "Memories Are Made of This" in the ubiquitous commercial for tapes from the Nifty Fifties.

Among the chief killers of the past are, of all people, writers. The increasing number of novels written in the present tense ("She takes off her bra and moves her hands down her hips, knowing that he is watching") are defended on grounds of "immediacy," but in fact their authors choose to hit the Record button because it saves them from getting tangled up in auxillary verbs.

We have developed a mental block against using past tenses correctly. Even educated people say "If he would have sent the letter.... if she would have gotten the job . . . if I would have had time. . . . " Damnit! A past action that precedes another past action takes the pluperfect: "If he *had* sent . . . if she *had* gotten . . . if I *had* had . . . " This is more than bad grammar: No longer willing or able to cope with anything unequivocal, we skirt the pluperfect and substitute the past-conditional to give ourselves what we imagine to be chronological wiggle room.

The word "past" has become a virtual synonym for bigotry and hence must be avoided by any means necessary. Everybody in publishing knows that Alexandra Ripley was chosen to write the sequel to *GWTW* because she came up with the craziest plot. An authentically rendered past makes a novel hold together, so to be on the safe side she opted for shattered, dragging the story to Ireland to avoid dealing with the ex-slave characters and substituting a caesarian performed on Scarlett by a Celtic witch.

Our time conflicts have produced an intense interest in the past alongside an utter contempt for it. Editors used to write "off-chron" in the margins of manuscripts to call attention to errors of this type but now nobody cares how many howlers end up in print, and reviewers who do care are called "picky."

Among my shoot-the-messenger experiences was a biography of Clark Gable which claimed that while shooting the 1953 movie *Mogambo*, Grace Kelly called Gable a "male chauvinist pig," an expression born in the 1970s. The heroine of a novel set in 1938 spoke of looking "sexy," a word not in use 60 years ago. She also put on a brand-new pair of nylons straight from the box even though women of the stocking era always washed new nylons first to keep them from running. I've found a blouse in 1910 that should have been a "waist" and a record player in place of a "Victrola," but the worst was finding a 1955 scene in my own memoir updated by a proofreader who was blindsided by her own terminal now-ness: She changed "t—d" to "nerd" to conform to my 1985 publication date.

WE HAVE lost our grip on the rhythms of life. In the Middle Ages there were no clocks, just church bells ringing the canonical hours: Matins, Lauds, Prime, Terce, Sext, None, Vespers, and Compline. It was unhelpful for making precise appointments but as psychological accuracy it was unsurpassed. The sonorous bells literally reverberated within medieval man, cleansing his soul. By contrast, we get to watch a miracle take place when the detergent removes a stain from a T-shirt in ten seconds while the Elapsed Time ticks away at the bottom of the TV screen.

We have met the Y2K problem and it's us. If chaos ensues on January 1 it will simply be the climax of the time warp we are already in. In fact, it may happen even earlier. We always go around mumbling "Spring forward, Fall back" to prepare for the time change, but this year we could get it mixed up with "Put it behind us and move on" and go crazy before the computers do. **NR**

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